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Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives

January 1987

COMPLETED

FEDERAL EVALUATION

Fewer Units, Reduced Resources, Different Studies From 1980

GAO/PEMD-87-9

ORIGINAL

GAO

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Program Evaluation and
Methodology Division

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January 23, 1987

The Honorable Ted Weiss
Chairman, Subcommittee on Intergovernmental
Relations and Human Resources
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you requested, in this report we present our findings regarding recent changes in the status of program evaluation activities in the non-defense executive departments and agencies. Using data collected from program evaluation offices, we summarize the fiscal and human resources and program evaluation activities of these offices as of late 1984. To determine whether the nature and scope of these activities have changed, we make comparisons with similar data we gathered in 1980. We also discuss the significance of our findings for congressional oversight of government programs.

As we agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution of it until 30 days from the date of the report. At that time, we will send copies to those who are interested and will make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Chelimsky
Director

Executive Summary

Purpose

How effectively the federal government is using over 400 billion dollars of nondefense funds is an important concern for the Congress, the administration and the public. Program evaluations can provide information about what services programs are actually delivering, how they are being managed and the extent to which they are effective. Title VII of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 makes GAO responsible for informing the Congress about the nature and scope of federal program evaluation activities. This report addresses two broad questions: (1) What is the current level of program evaluation activity in the executive branch? and (2) What changes occurred between 1980 and 1984?

Background

In 1982, GAO published a Special Study describing the nature and scope of federal non-defense program evaluation activities conducted in fiscal year 1980. Because there were several reasons to expect changes since 1980 in both the extent of federal program evaluation activity and its character, GAO conducted a second survey in 1984. GAO surveyed officials within evaluation units, and using this information, compared resources (funds and staff) and products (evaluations and their use) for 1980 and 1984 (see pp. 10-14).

Results in Brief

Between 1980 and 1984, the total amount of program evaluation resources declined considerably. Fewer program evaluation units were in operation, and both budgetary and human resources were reduced. This was especially true for departments affected by block grants. Although legislative funding specifically earmarked for evaluation (i.e., evaluation set-asides) declined, it generally was not reduced as much as evaluation resources obtained from internal budget allocations.

Despite these reductions, the number of evaluation studies remained roughly the same, suggesting continued executive branch interest in obtaining evaluative information. On the other hand, a potential conclusion of increased efficiency in producing evaluation studies is ruled out by closer inspection of the types of studies being undertaken, which reveals that their nature and scope have both changed. In general, low-cost, short-turn-around, internal studies and non-technical reports—usually initiated at the request of top agency officials or program managers—increased in number and as a proportion of all studies; larger, longer, externally conducted studies and more technical reports showed the opposite trend. Also, evidence concerning the dissemination and use of evaluation products suggests that evaluations have become less

readily available to the Congress and the public, reinforcing the evidence on the change to a more internal character in executive branch studies.

Principal Findings

Units Decreased

In 1980, 180 units in non-defense departments and agencies responded that they engaged in program evaluation activities. In 1984, 133 reported similar activities, representing a 26 percent decline since 1980. While 15 new units were identified, 66 (or about 37 percent) of those reporting evaluation activities in 1980 changed their orientation away from program evaluation, were reorganized or were abolished. Within this group, about one-fourth were previously housed in departments with responsibility for major social programs (see p. 16).

Resources Reduced

Fiscal resources for evaluation units were reduced by 37 percent (in constant 1980 dollars). This compares to a 4 percent increase over the same period for these units' departments and agencies as a whole. The number of professional staff in evaluation units was reduced by 22 percent. In contrast, the reduction in the number of federal workers in these departments and agencies was approximately 6 percent (see p. 24).

Block Grants

Block grant legislation has resulted in disproportionately large decreases in levels of evaluation staff and studies for units within departments that had previously been evaluating relevant categorical programs. It is likely, therefore, that less information generalized to the national level will be available concerning programs affected by block grants (see pp. 26-28).

Set-Asides

While only about 20 percent of the units with continued evaluation activity between 1980 and 1984 reported any legislative set-aside funding for evaluation, the results suggest that set-asides formed a "floor" for departments administering programs such as those affected by block grants. Internal budget allocations did not compensate for set-aside reductions, and indeed tended to decrease more rapidly than the set-asides themselves (see pp. 31-32).

Evaluations Continued

Despite these changes in number of units, funding levels, and number of professional staff, the number of evaluation studies decreased by only 3 percent. This suggests continued executive branch interest in program evaluations (see p. 22).

Nature and Scope

The fact that the overall number of evaluation studies remained approximately the same over the 1980-1984 period, despite cuts in the number of evaluation units and in the resources available to those remaining, does not mean that evaluation units have become more efficient in producing the same kind of information that they produced in 1980. Rather, they have shifted their work toward the quicker, less expensive studies and non-technical reports produced by internal staff and away from the costlier, more time-consuming studies conducted by external evaluators (see pp. 33-35, 37, and 39-40).

Dissemination

Studies were being done principally at the request of program managers and top agency officials, and the results were being disseminated primarily to them (see pp. 40-41 and 44-45).

Reduced Availability of Evaluative Information

Short, low-cost, non-technical studies cannot typically present strong information on program results. Therefore, since technically adequate, well-disseminated evaluations informing on program results are likely to require relatively large investments of funding and staff resources, that information is likely to be much reduced in the future. The evidence from this report suggests that findings from both large and small studies have become less easily available for use by the Congress and the public (see pp. 28, 42-43, and 50-51).

Matter for Congressional Consideration

In light of the changes in the nature and scope of program evaluation activities identified in this report, congressional committees should determine whether the agencies under their jurisdiction are developing and reporting the information needed by committees for their oversight responsibilities. This would include periodic reviews to ensure that agencies are fulfilling legislated mandates for the provision of evaluative information. To assure the availability of information required for oversight purposes, it might be necessary to specify—in law or accompanying committee reports—additional set-asides, mandated studies or improved dissemination of evaluation findings.

Recommendations

GAO is making no recommendations.

Agency Comments

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) expressed a number of concerns with our initial matters for consideration and other issues discussed in our draft. In OMB's view, program evaluation in the executive branch is intended primarily to inform agency decision-makers, not the public and Congress. OMB believes that GAO's method in this review underreports the amount of program evaluation activity, citing one instance in which studies were not reported to GAO by the department involved. OMB concludes that since agency decision-makers have the discretion to allocate resources to program evaluation, there is no threat, to them, of an information shortage (see pp. 95-102).

We have clarified our matter for consideration by focusing on the potential need for congressional committees to review whether they are receiving information adequate for oversight purposes. GAO also has reviewed the methods used in this study in view of OMB's statements, and has found the population enumeration procedures appropriate and the resultant findings reliable. Furthermore, changes in favor of shorter, non-technical studies produced for agency officials suggest that the balance has shifted towards the information interests of these officials, possibly at the expense of oversight information. GAO continues to believe, therefore, that the adequacy of information for oversight warrants congressional review (see pp. 52-55 and 103-5).

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Abbreviations

CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
GAO	General Accounting Office
GSA	General Services Administration
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
OBRA	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
RIF	Reduction in Force

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Introduction

How effectively the government is using over $400 billion of nondefense funds is an important concern for the Congress, the administration and the public. Program evaluation can provide information about what is happening in federal programs, how they are managed, and whether or not they are effective. Congress has legislated, over many years, various requirements for program evaluations to be conducted by departments and agencies in the federal government. It has been the intent of the Congress that evaluation data be easily accessible for oversight and budget review, and for the operational needs of executive departments and agencies. An additional objective has been to make evaluation information on federal programs readily available to those outside of government who have an interest in such information. This report focuses on the extent of federal executive branch program evaluation activity (excluding the area of defense) in 1984 and examines how it has changed since 1980.

Title VII of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-344, as amended by P.L. 97-258, September 13, 1982) makes GAO responsible for informing Congress about the nature and scope of federal program evaluation activities. In 1980, GAO surveyed the program evaluation efforts underway at that time and later published a Special Study reporting its results[1]. Across all non-defense departments and agencies, about $177 million were being spent on about 2,400 evaluations, under the guidance of about 1,500 professional staff.

Legislative and Administrative Context Since 1980

Over the past several years, a variety of legislative and executive actions have been initiated that might have been expected to alter the nature and scope of evaluation activity at the federal level. Some, such as an increase in the use of block grants, might be expected to decrease national-level program evaluation efforts; others, such as the concern for increased program efficiency, might be expected to lead to increases.

Changes Likely to Reduce Program Evaluation Activity

Since 1980, the Congress has passed legislation which could directly affect the conduct of evaluation by federal departments and agencies. The following congressional actions, in particular, could reduce the scope of evaluation activities for at least some evaluation units.

[1] A Profile of Federal Evaluation Activities, GAO/IPE, Special Study 1 (Washington, D.C.: September, 1982, Accession No. 119730).

Block Grants

In 1981, the Congress passed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA; P.L. 97-35), consolidating eighty federal categorical programs into nine block grants to the states. In October 1982, Congress also replaced five Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA; P.L. 93-203) programs with a new block grant to the states (JTPA, the Job Training Partnership Act; P.L. 97-300) as a means of providing job training for disadvantaged youths and adults.[2] The essence of the federal block grant programs was to allow the states flexibility to design and administer programs that could be more responsive to local conditions.

In many cases, the block grants initiated under OBRA or JTPA required neither the states nor the federal government to conduct program evaluations. As such, it was expected at least some of those evaluation units housed within the affected federal departments (Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor) would undergo declines in their evaluation activities, as measured by their overall budgets, the size of their staffs, and the number of evaluation studies produced.[3]

Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-369)

This legislation contained sections setting targets for savings in federal government operations. Areas identified in the Act and relevant to the conduct of federal program evaluation include staff travel, the use of consultant and audiovisual services, and publishing.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-511)

The key objective of this legislation was to ensure that information requested by federal agencies be (1) needed by the agency, (2) unavailable elsewhere, and (3) efficiently collected. The Act appears to have made some difference in the overall volume of paperwork required for federal operations. The OMB has reported that by the close of FY 1983 federal paperwork had been cut by 32%, and that initiatives were in place to reduce paperwork even further.[4] In implementing this legislation, OMB (and appropriate officials in the executive departments and

[2]In addition, five block grants had been established prior to 1981. The effects of these block grants on evaluation activities are not analyzed in this report. On program and administrative changes under block grants, see GAO/PEMD-82-8, GAO/HRD-84-35, GAO/HRD-84-76, and GAO/HRD-85-46.

[3]A relatively small categorical program, administered by the Department of Agriculture—the Puerto Rico food assistance program—was converted to a block grant. We did not expect this to significantly affect the evaluation enterprise in Agriculture.

[4]Office of Management and Budget, Management of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 1986 (Washington, D.C.: 1985), p. 63. Findings from an investigation in response to similar concerns for the status of the federal statistical community are presented in GAO/IMTEC-84-17.

agencies) were expected to intensify their screening of data collection instruments.

For individual evaluations that rely on new data collection, this screening could be expected to hinder or delay production and dissemination of the evaluative data. When timeliness is an issue, we would expect units to rely on alternative methods of data gathering (e.g., secondary data sources) or shifts toward smaller scale data collection activities that are exempt from screening or approval.

Changes Likely to Maintain or Increase Evaluation Activity

Since 1980, several proposals have been made to assure a greater contribution of program evaluation to the federal policy process. The Grace Commission noted many opportunities under which program evaluation could contribute to controlling the costs of federal activities. In its review, the Commission was supportive of the evaluation function, calling for several administrative changes intended to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency. Notable among the Commission's recommendations are that actions be taken to promote integrated planning of evaluation activities across the federal departments and agencies.[5]

In a private study of policy prospects for the second term of the Reagan presidency, the Heritage Foundation concluded its analysis with a suggestion to "political executives" in the administration to make use of policy evaluation to promote change in government programs and to control the size of government.[6] This implies that increased efforts to achieve a more efficient government should be associated with intensified evaluation activities.

In 1985, the GAO broadened discussions of the evaluation function by featuring it as an integral part of a conceptual framework for financial management of the government.[7] Evaluation in this framework is intended to provide "feedback on the effectiveness of government-financed policies, programs, organizations, projects, and activities, and on whether, how well, and how efficiently they are achieving their

[5]President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, "Task Force Report on Federal Management Systems, Report FMS-10, Improvement of Federal Evaluation," Working Appendix, Vol. II (Washington, D.C., 1983), pp. 56-57.

[6]Stuart M. Butler, Michael Sanera, and W. Bruce Weinrod, Mandate for Leadership II, Continuing the Conservative Revolution, (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1984), pp. 541-543.

[7]Managing the Cost of Government: Building An Effective Financial Management Structure, GAO/AFMD-85-35-A, Washington, D.C., 1985.

intended objectives"(p. 52). This feedback is to be used by managers, policymakers, and the public. The framework also illuminates the diversity of the evaluation function. At the core of the management process, evaluation information is viewed as cost-output data; it is to be integrated into a comprehensive budget and accounting system. The report also recognizes that meeting all evaluation information needs of policymakers, the public and managers will require additional analytic studies.

Summary

In summary, these developments—changes in legislation, administrative adjustments, and recent observations noting the role of program evaluation in an era of cost containment — together raise questions concerning the current status of evaluation in the federal government. Of particular relevance for this report is the extent to which program evaluation activities have changed between 1980 and 1984. We also examine the influence of some of the factors discussed above on current evaluation activities.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this report are to provide a description of federal non-defense evaluation activities in 1984, and to compare these, where applicable, to evaluation activities as they existed in 1980.

We focus on two broad questions:

- What is the current level of program evaluation activity?
- What changes have occurred since 1980?

We aimed at an overall status assessment of program evaluation activities in all non-defense agencies.

As in our earlier report, we wanted to determine:

- the amount of evaluative activity, as represented by the number and types of studies that were conducted;
- strategies employed by departments and agencies to accomplish evaluation objectives; and
- perceptions of evaluators about various aspects of the evaluation enterprise.

Due to our decision in 1980 to use the universe of evaluation units constituted by OMB's Circular A-117 ("Management Improvement and the

Use of Evaluation in the Executive Branch"), our review is limited to departments and agencies outside the defense community.

OMB Circular A-117

The 1980 survey used OMB's A-117 listings as a means of identifying units within departments and agencies that reported engaging in program evaluation activities. As is evident from the title of A-117, it focused on more than issues related to program evaluation activities. As part of a general review of all OMB circulars, initiated under the President's Reform 88 Management Improvement Program, A-117 was rescinded; the stated reason for this action was that it "has no current value to OMB or the agencies."[8] Discussions with OMB officials revealed that a change in the way OMB monitors management improvement was the primary reason for the determination that the circular was no longer useful. Currently, OMB does not monitor program evaluation activity across all departments or agencies on a regular basis. Rather, evaluation practices are monitored on an ad hoc basis, e.g., as part of management improvement reviews or only when a problem arises.

OMB recently has reported on other forms of information-gathering activity within the federal government.[9] While program evaluation was mentioned by some departments that reported to OMB on their statistical activities, OMB did not explicitly ask for resources associated with program evaluation as a separate category, nor did OMB require agencies or departments to report on statistical activities if their annual budget for statistical products was less than $500,000.

While OMB appears to be interested in program evaluation as a means of management improvement, there is currently no regular and systematic information available (and thus available to the Congress and the public) on the nature and scope of program evaluation activities in the federal government.

Scope and Methodology

This study examines features of federal evaluation activity in 1980 and 1984. For both years, all non-defense departments and agencies which might be engaged in evaluation activity were identified. At the end of

[8]"Evaluation of OMB Circulars." A Reform 88 Report by the Assistant Secretaries for Management and the Office of Management and Budget, January 1983, p. 6.

[9]Federal Statistics: A Special Report on the Statistical Programs and Activities of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 1985. Statistical Policy Office, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C., April 1984.

fiscal years 1980 and 1984, a survey was mailed to the head of each unit. Nonresponses were followed up by telephone conversations and duplicate mailings.

There are two noteworthy differences between what we did in 1980 and 1984: (1) the universes of evaluation units were identified by different processes and (2) additional questions were added to the 1984 questionnaire.[10] Each of these modifications is discussed separately.

Identifying the Universe of Evaluation Units

We continue to use the same definition for program evaluation activities as in our earlier study. This was the definition appearing in OMB's Circular A-117:

"...a formal assessment, through objective measurement and systematic analyses, of the manner and extent to which Federal programs (or their components) achieve their objectives or produce other significant effects, used to assist management and policy decisionmaking."

For 1980, the universe of units which were considered to be conducting program evaluation activities was readily identifiable through OMB as part of the reporting requirements established by Circular A-117. In 1980, this involved 246 units. After checking with these groups as to the actuality of their performance of program evaluations, we identified 12 departments and 25 other agencies, which together supported 180 units conducting program evaluations. As noted, since Circular A-117 was rescinded in 1983, there has been no single source for defining the universe of units engaging in program evaluation.

Three steps were taken in identifying non-defense evaluation units for inclusion in the 1984 survey:

(1) We began with the list of respondents to our 1980 profile, which itself was derived from OMB's list of federal program evaluation units;

(2) To update the 1980 list, we cross-checked it with a list of sources used to produce the most recent edition of GAO's sourcebook on evaluations, Federal Evaluations 1984;

(3) We conducted on-site visits to the 12 departments and many of the agencies to gain their cooperation in updating our list of active program

[10]Copies of both questionnaires, from 1980 and 1984, are available upon request.

evaluation units, and to explain the objectives of the 1984 survey. Those agencies that were not visited by the study team were contacted by telephone.

As with the 1982 study of 1980 evaluation activities, agency and department evaluation unit officials were asked to complete a questionnaire if their organizational unit conducted program evaluations as defined in OMB Circular A-117 (quoted verbatim in the cover letter). If the unit's activities were not consistent with the definition, we asked the addressee to document this in a letter.

For 1984, we identified 281 potential evaluation units; the first mailing of the questionnaire served as the final stage in refining the study universe. Some units from our 1980 survey excluded themselves from the 1984 profile as no longer conducting program evaluations. In some cases, agencies or departments chose to aggregate their responses from several units on our mailing list into a single response from one organizational unit. In some cases, we discovered that new units had been formed.

In 1980, 180 units in non-defense departments and agencies responded that they engaged in program evaluation activities, while in 1984, 133 reported similar activities. This represents a 26 percent decline since 1980; units within departments were reduced by 36 percent (from 140 to 90) and units within agencies increased slightly (8 percent, from 40 to 43).

While 15 new units were identified, about 37 percent of those reporting evaluation activities in 1980 changed their orientation away from program evaluation, were reorganized or were abolished. About one-fourth (26 percent) of these units were previously housed in cabinet-level departments with responsibility for major social programs. A detailed analysis of these changes appears in appendix I.

The 1984 Questionnaire

Most of the items from the 1980 questionnaire were retained. Direct comparison of the items included in both the 1980 and 1984 questionnaires permit identification of changes that have occurred in evaluation activities. The 1984 questionnaire also contains items developed to provide an interpretive framework for differences that might be found between 1980 and 1984.

Finally, we pretested the questionnaire in selected units in three departments (Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education), and one agency (the Veterans Administration) during the summer of 1984, and modified some questionnaire items based upon the results of this testing.

Data Collection Methods

We located 281 evaluation units in 12 departments and 30 agencies. A questionnaire was mailed to these 281 units in September, 1984, the same month as the 1980 questionnaire had been sent out. After three follow-up attempts with initial non-respondents, 274 responses were gathered by completion of data collection in January, 1985, representing 98 percent of the entries on our mailing list.[11]

Where appropriate, the 1984 questionnaire responses were matched to responses from the 1980 questionnaire. These matches served as a means of examining changes at the individual unit level.

Levels of Analysis

To achieve our study objectives, our data analysis strategy has taken several forms. First, we examined the aggregate level of activity across all departments and agencies for 1980 and 1984 separately. This allows us to repeat the 1980 analyses on the 1984 responses. As such, this level of analysis summarizes the total amount of reported evaluation during each year. In addition, aggregate values for departments and agencies are reported separately. This comparison was made throughout the 1982 Special Study and continues to be an important distinction. In particular, evaluation units within departments were more likely, compared to units within agencies, to be influenced by cost-containment efforts applied to the programs they administered.

As noted earlier, assessing change over the 1980-1984 period was somewhat more difficult. Evaluation units were disbanded or created in the intervening years, making it difficult to interpret direct comparisons using the aggregate findings. Other units changed names, were combined or divided into smaller units, and so on. There were a few units whose historical roots we could not determine with certainty.

[11]The response rate reflects contact with 98 percent of the units identified in the universe. The number of units reporting evaluation activities is substantially lower than the number of respondents (see appendix I for details) The response rate for 1980 was 94 percent of the 246 units surveyed for that study.

Since for some assessments of change it would have been invalid to combine information from units that differ in response or organizational histories, we identified for our second level of analysis four categories of units: (1) those that reported a stable evaluation function between 1980 and 1984; (2) those that were newly created since 1980; (3) those that were in operation in 1980 but were no longer in operation as evaluation units in 1984; and (4) those for which the response history was uncertain. Some analyses in this report rely on selected categories of units.

Third, in order to examine the effects of block grants, where it is appropriate, we have reported separately the data from departments whose programs were affected by block grants and those from departments not affected by block grants.

Strengths and Limitations of This Study

We intend this study to offer the Congress, program managers, evaluators, and other members of the policy community— in the federal government as well as outside it—information in four areas. First, in accord with GAO's mandate from Title VII of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, this study provides a summary of current federal program evaluation activities. Second, this study represents the first attempt, since GAO's earlier profile of 1980 evaluation activities, to survey and analyze these functions as they are currently conducted across the various federal departments and agencies. Third, we present a discussion, in broad perspective, of how federal evaluation practices and activities have changed since 1980. Finally, the data and findings from this study, combined with those from GAO's earlier profile, form a foundation for comparisons at a later time to assess the effects on program evaluation of changes in federal policies and administrative practices. The 1984 data presented here portray federal evaluation as observed a year prior to Congress' passage of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177; Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation), which could severely limit the availability of funding resources for the federal government in coming years.[12]

There are several potential weaknesses associated with this study relating to data collection and analysis. In the next section we discuss four issues and describe how we have attempted to gain a measure of control over their influence.

[12]Parts of P.L. 99-177 were found unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1986; at the time of this writing, however, other similar deficit control legislation is under consideration by the Congress.

Accuracy of the Identified Universe

In constructing our 1984 universe we may have failed to include some active evaluation units, or may have included some units the activities of which only roughly approximate the Circular A-117 definition of program evaluation.

We took three measures to control erroneous inclusion and exclusion. First, we asked agency and department representatives to revise, to the best of their knowledge, the 1980 mailing list to reflect the 1984 universe. Second, we made follow-up telephone contacts with evaluation personnel to verify changes in status. Third, by over-including units in our initial mailing list, allowing the survey results to finalize the actual universe of active units, we avoided excluding units erroneously. However, without the OMB circular, we are totally dependent on the accuracy in each case of what respondents have told us they are doing or are not doing. Cost considerations did not permit us to carry out an exhaustive search for units conducting evaluations which were overlooked by agency officials we contacted.

Accuracy of Respondent Reporting

The OMB definition of "program evaluation" leaves room for a variety of interpretations. Specifically, Circular A-117's definition, for our data collection purposes, is not clear on three points. First, no criterion is provided concerning the minimum staff size required for a "formal assessment, through objective measurement and systematic analyses" of programs. Some units on our mailing list did not complete our questionnaire on the grounds that staff time allocated to evaluation was too small to justify responding. Second, the definition does not explicitly include or exclude evaluation activities conducted internally by an operational program unit. Third, the definition does not specify whether process evaluations are to be included. Our follow-up activities uncovered several reasons for nonresponse (see appendix I) related to interpretational ambiguities—for example, some unit officials perceived their activities as "monitoring" or "reviewing" rather than evaluating programs. Follow-up interviews with selected respondents suggest to us that a few units which actually conducted evaluation according to the definition failed to complete the survey. Some units which were engaged in program monitoring, data management, or other activities not strictly defined as program evaluation may, however, have misunderstood the definition and responded erroneously to the survey. Estimates of the extent to which this happened in either 1980 or 1984 are not available. However, our analyses of the likely influence of underreporting show that estimates of change in key variables are, on average, influenced very little (see appendix II).

We also note that no formal method (such as on-site interviewing) could be undertaken to verify the accuracy or completeness of reporting by respondents to our mailed survey. Individual respondents varied in terms of their status within their organization's hierarchy, and it may be assumed that their level of familiarity with evaluation activities also varied. In most cases, the individual who completed our questionnaire was not the same individual who responded on behalf of the same unit in 1980. Despite these differences, analyses of responses given in 1980 and 1984 show a high degree of consistency (see appendix II).

Finally, possible inaccuracies from two sources may have distorted the results. First, the respondents may have become fatigued in completing an 85-item questionnaire. Second, since a copy of the 1982 Special Study was enclosed with the 1984 survey, respondents may have framed their answers by consulting the 1980 findings. We were able, however, to check on this latter point. For both staff and resources, there is strong evidence of the consistency of the responses (i.e., reliability) and little evidence that respondents simply reported their 1984 values based on the 1980 survey results (see appendix II).

Data Base for Causal Analysis

Caution must be used in deriving cause-and-effect interpretations from our data. Some of our data offer partial explanations for observed changes in evaluation activities between 1980 and 1984, but other factors may need to be taken into account when judging the validity of such explanations.

Assumption Used in Our Analysis

In interpreting our questionnaire items, we made one key assumption. Namely, we interpret the number of evaluations planned, completed, or underway as an indicator of the amount of information likely to be available to users of evaluation results. The number of evaluation studies produced is only a rough indicator of the amount of evaluative information made available, but it is a reasonable measure to use, recognizing the broad objectives of this report. The extent to which such information is actually used also is an important issue, but this study can only provide limited findings about it.

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Changes in Executive Branch Program Evaluation

In comparison with 1980, the 1984 profile of evaluation for nondefense departments and agencies has changed dramatically. Relative to 1980 levels, in the aggregate, fiscal resources devoted to program evaluation have declined by over one-third and full-time evaluation staff have been reduced by nearly one-quarter.[1] The reductions in staff and fiscal resources for program evaluation were considerably greater than changes that have occurred in these nondefense departments and agencies as a whole. However, agency officials reported only a modest decrease in the number of evaluation studies.

This pattern of results may suggest at first glance that there has been a considerable increase in efficiency. That is, there appears to be a small loss in information (as represented by number of studies) in exchange for a large saving in costs. This aggregate view masks, however, a number of changes in the nature and scope of evaluations conducted (see chapter 3), as well as the reality of many relatively small increases, particularly in the agencies, and some very large reductions, particularly in the departments affected by block grants.

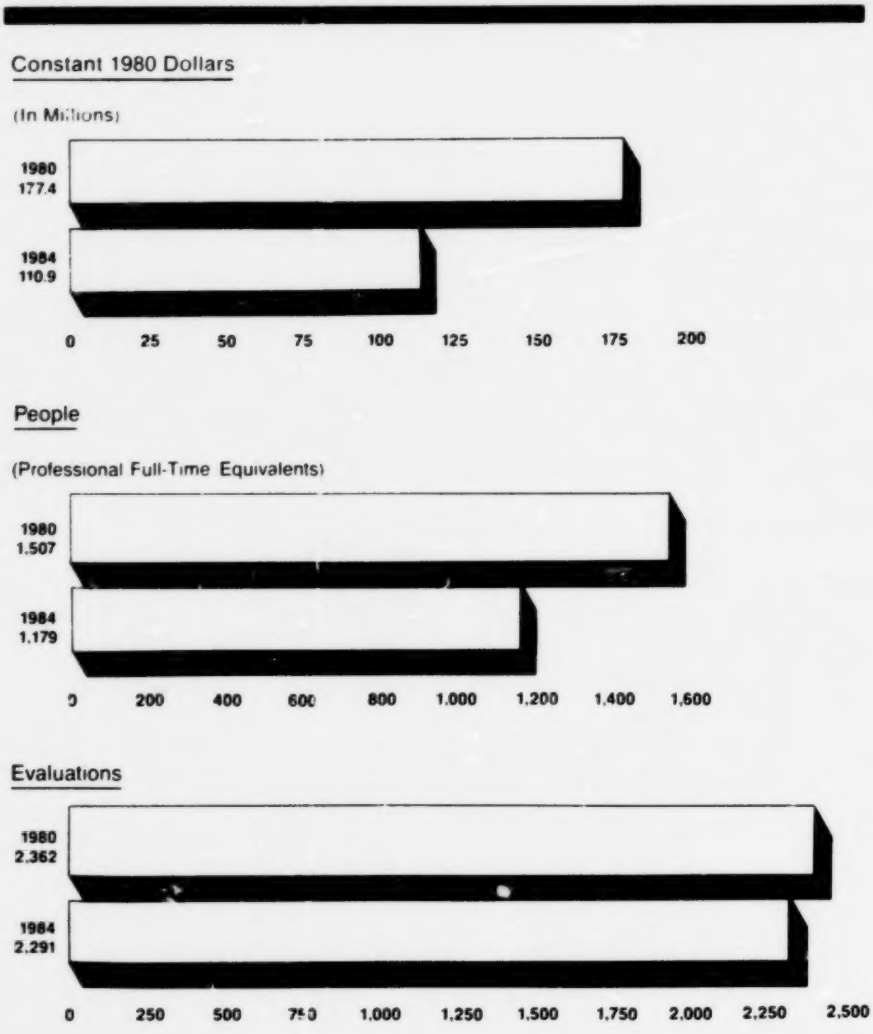
The Aggregate Profile

We found that the federal evaluation effort in 1984, as reported by evaluation officials in nondefense departments and agencies, involved $138.9 million dollars (or $110.9 million in constant 1980 dollars[2]), 1,179 professional staff, and 2,291 studies planned, completed or underway. As figure 2.1 shows, this represented a notable decline in funding (a 37 percent reduction in constant 1980 dollars from the $177.4 million reported in 1980) and in professional staff (a 22 percent reduction from 1,507 reported in 1980), but only a modest loss of evaluation studies (only a 3 percent reduction from the 2,362 reported in 1980). That is, despite substantial losses in fiscal and human resources, the number of evaluation studies remained roughly the same. This suggests a continued executive branch interest in obtaining evaluation information with whatever resources are available.

[1]Budget figures used in our analyses of 1980-to-1984 changes in fiscal resources are based on estimates reported late in each of these fiscal years. Use of estimate figures from our two surveys maintains comparability of data. For further details, see p. 54.

[2]To obtain comparable measures of purchasing power, 1984 dollars have been converted to 1980 constant dollars through the use of an overall GNP price deflator. The deflator was derived from Economic Report of the President (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February, 1985), table B-3.

Figure 2.1: Dollars, People and Evaluations Underway



Funding and Staffing for Evaluation Were More Affected Than Were Funding and Staffing for the Nondefense Federal Sector as a Whole

In our introductory chapter, we noted that over the past four years, there have been a number of initiatives directed at reducing the size of the federal government. To what extent do changes in evaluation staff and other resources mirror patterns for the general federal government?

The total numbers of employees in the non-defense departments and a few selected agencies were obtained from data published by the Office of Personnel Management for the beginning of fiscal years 1980 and 1984. In addition, data on the budgets of the cabinet departments and selected agencies were obtained from published OMB documents. We compared these data against personnel levels and budgets for evaluation units derived from our survey questionnaire.

Staff Resources

The total number of federal evaluators has decreased in proportion much more than has the number of nondefense federal workers. Whereas from fiscal year 1980 to 1984, this workforce decreased by approximately 6 percent, the total number of evaluators in the nondefense federal workforce decreased from 1,507 in fiscal year 1980 to 1,179 in fiscal year 1984, a 22 percent decrease.

Fiscal Resources

With regard to fiscal resources, OMB figures show an increase of 4 percent (roughly $17 billion in 1980 constant dollars) in total budget outlays (excluding net interest) between 1980 and 1984 for the non-defense departments and selected agencies. Outlays for evaluation activities within these departments and agencies declined from $177.4 million in 1980 to $110.9 million in 1984 (in 1980 constant dollars). Thus, while the overall budget in the non-defense cabinet departments and independent agencies increased by 4 percent, outlays for evaluation activities decreased by 37 percent.

Results at the Department and Agency Level

The aggregate masks some small increases and some large reductions in evaluation resources and studies. Table 2.1 presents results at the department and agency levels; appendix I gives data for all individual units reporting in 1980 only, 1984 only, or in both years. As table 2.1 shows, in the aggregate, departments experienced losses in fiscal resources, staff and evaluations; the agencies (except GSA) experienced increases on all three measures.

Table 2.1: Money, People and Evaluations: Reported Federal Evaluation Activities in Nondefense Units in 1980 and 1984

	($M)[a]		People[b]		Evaluations[c]	
	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984
Departments						
Agriculture	17.8	19.5	124	180	205	327
Commerce	13.0	0	33	0	61	0
Education[d]	23.9	16.5	37	37	133	31
Energy	4.3	9	34	12	88	20
Health and Human Services[d]	39.1	22.8	238	104	389	334
Housing and Urban Development	11.3	6.4	86	52	97	37
Interior	6.3	2.3	160	45	180	98
Justice	16.8	3.7	145	92	249	154
Labor[d]	20.6	4.7	95	34	118	59
State	1.5	3.6	15	34	8	14
Transportation	3.6	2.7	47	36	46	66
Treasury	2.9	3.7	74	61	95	115
All Departments	**161.1**	**86.9**	**1,088**	**687**	**1,663**	**1,255**
Agencies						
GSA	5.4	4.9	168	133	244	345
Other agencies[e]	11.0	19.1	251	359	455	691
All agencies	**16.4**	**24.0**	**419**	**492**	**699**	**1,036**
Grand Total	**177.4**	**110.9**	**1,507**	**1,179**	**2,362**	**2,291**

[a]Dollars in millions, anticipated actual FY1980 and FY1984 expenditures only. 1984 dollars are expressed in 1980 constant dollars (inflation-adjusted 1984 dollars are 79.87% of their nominal 1984 value). Individual entries may not sum to totals, due to rounding.

[b]Full time equivalent professional staff only.

[c]Evaluations are all projects underway or completed in FY1980 or FY1984, including those initiated in previous years.

[d]Departments with substantial categorical programs converted to block grants under OBRA, 1981, and/or Job Training and Partnership Act, 1982.

[e]Detailed information on the individual agencies, as well as on units within departments and agencies, is given in appendix I.

The Departments of Commerce (the only department which reported that no studies meeting the OMB definition were being conducted in 1984), Justice and Labor experienced the greatest losses. The impact, in terms of information availability, was particularly marked for Commerce (from 61 to 0 program evaluations).[3] The Departments of Education (from 133 to 31 studies), Energy (88 to 20 studies), Housing and Urban Development (97 to 37 studies), Interior (180 to 98 studies), Justice (249 to 154 studies) and Labor (118 to 59 studies) also notably were affected. Some agencies—including ACTION, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission—also reported decreases of similar size.

There were some agencies and departments whose evaluation production effort increased. However, with one exception (Agriculture), the increases were small for the departments (from 8 studies to 14 for State, 46 to 66 for Transportation) and for the agencies. Among the agencies that showed increases were the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the Federal Maritime Commission, the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Smithsonian Institution.

In general, at the department level, we found that units reporting increases in evaluations were not doing more for less. That is, with a few exceptions, such as the Department of Treasury, increases in numbers of evaluations were accompanied by increases in money, professional staff, or both. For example, the 60 percent increase in evaluations reported by the Department of Agriculture was accompanied by a 10 percent increase in money (in constant 1980 dollars) and a 45 percent increase in professional staff.

Effects of Block Grants

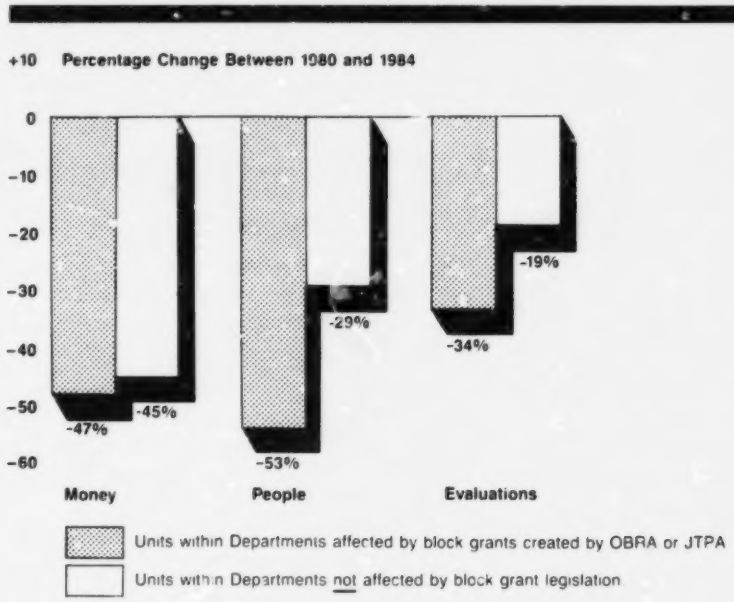
At the department level, as table 2.1 shows, 9 of 12 departments lost fiscal resources for program evaluation activities; State, Treasury and Agriculture gained in fiscal resources. However, as suggested in the introduction, (see p. 11), block grant legislation may have differentially affected units within specific departments. To bring the effects of block

[3]See the comments by OMB in appendix III and our response in chapter 7.

grants into focus, we compared dollars, staff and studies for departments affected by block grants (i.e., Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor) with those not affected by block grants. These analyses (see figure 2.2) show that, compared with units in departments not affected by block grants, units within departments affected by block grants:

- lost roughly the same in funds (a 47 percent decrease in constant 1980 dollars versus a 45 percent decrease); but
- lost substantially more staff (a 53 percent decrease versus a 29 percent decrease); and
- decreased more markedly in studies produced (a 34 percent decrease versus a 19 percent decrease).[4]

Figure 2.2: Percentage Change in Evaluation Activity Associated With Block Grant and Non-Block Grant Departments Between 1980 and 1984



[4]Not all units within the departments designated as "affected by block grants" actually had responsibility for categorical programs that were subsequently converted to block grants. As such, these comparisons, based on departmental level data, include units that were and were not affected. The 1984 questionnaire contained one item that asked whether the unit had been affected by block grants. If we use this self-report indicator of the effects of block grants as a way of identifying units, the changes between 1980 and 1984 in fiscal resources, staff and evaluations are similar to those reported at the department level. Namely, in the aggregate, these 9 units experienced budget reductions of 48 percent, staff reductions of 47 percent, and a 24 percent decline in number of studies.

These analyses permit us to conclude that block grants have led to a decrease in evaluation activity beyond that due to other influences (e.g., reduction-in-force) on the departments. That is, while consolidations and budget reductions affected evaluations of non-blocked programs administered by the departments we surveyed, programs affected by block grants are likely to have disproportionately less information available at the national level about them. As a result, in the block grant area, congressional and other information needs will be more dependent than in the past on studies developed at state or local levels; these studies are not likely to produce data that are generalizable to the nation. To assure that necessary information is produced, congressional committees may have to rely on their own information resources (i.e., the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Research Service, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Office of Technology Assessment) or make their information needs known to the executive branch through mandated studies, additional set-asides, or requests made in congressional hearings.

Some Units Showed Increases

Not all units experienced losses in resources or products. Among the stable units, some displayed increases in fiscal resources, and at least a sustained number of evaluations, between 1980 and 1984. However, only twenty-nine units—or 30 percent of all stable units—showed this profile. Among these units were the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, the U.S. Parole Commission in the Department of Justice, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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Sources and Use of Evaluation Funds

In the aggregate, officials estimated that about $138.9 million (in 1984 dollars) was spent on evaluation in 1984; relative to 1980, some agencies and departments reported small increases, while most departments reported decreases.[1] What did these changes mean in evaluation costs and how resources were allocated? We were particularly interested in shifts in emphasis (e.g., greater reliance on internal studies or on non-competitive awards). Such shifts might affect the timeliness of information, the perceived impartiality of information, or its availability to the Congress and the public. To address these issues, as stated in chapter 1, we have restricted our assessment to those units reporting evaluation activities in both 1980 and 1984.

Many officials in evaluation units reported difficulties in obtaining funds for evaluation. On the other hand, the manner in which evaluation funds were spent remained relatively stable between 1980 and 1984. In both years, most of the funds came from internal budgets. However, departments (in the aggregate) increasingly relied on set-asides as internal budgets were cut, and the declines in fiscal resources from 1980 to 1984 did affect the way evaluation units distributed their funds and the activities that they undertook.

The costs and types of evaluations have changed since 1980. First, the absolute number and proportion of lower-cost evaluation studies increased. Second, the number and proportion of internal evaluations increased. Third, the number and proportion of sole-source awards increased. There were differences between departments and agencies in these shifts. Agencies showed a large increase in the number of evaluation studies, principally due to increases in internal studies.

Obtaining Funds

Due to the general declines in budgets for evaluation units and concerns about containing costs of the federal government, it seemed reasonable to expect that administrators of evaluation units would find it more difficult to obtain funding in 1984 than in 1980. This was partially confirmed by data from our 1984 survey. Specifically, when asked directly about obtaining funds, about 45 percent of the responding units indicated they had more difficulty in getting them, 38 percent indicated that it was just as hard in 1984 as it was in 1980, and 17 percent indicated they had less difficulty in 1984 than in 1980. Interestingly, this pattern

[1]Budget figures used in our analyses of 1980-to-1984 changes in fiscal resources are based on estimates reported late in each of these fiscal years. Use of estimate figures from our two surveys maintains comparability of data.

was comparable across categories of units, despite sizeable differences in their relative gains or losses in resources.

Where Funds Came From

Funds for evaluation activities come from various sources. These include legislative set-asides (the Congress may specifically earmark funds for a particular evaluation function during the appropriation cycle), internal budgets (evaluation funds are determined within the department or agency itself from administrative funds or other outlays appropriated by the Congress), or other sources (e.g., intergovernmental transfers).

In 1984, as in 1980, evaluation funds for departments came primarily from internal (52 percent) and legislative (47 percent) sources, while evaluation funds for independent agencies came almost wholly (99 percent) from internal sources. Relative to 1980, however, as table 3.1 shows, proportionately more 1984 money (47 versus 40 percent) came to departments from set-asides than from other sources. Specifically, set-aside money decreased by 27 percent for departments ($46.8 million in 1980 versus $34.0 million in constant dollars in 1984) while internal budgets and other sources decreased by 40 percent and 91 percent, respectively.

Table 3.1: Sources of Evaluation Funds

	Dollars (millions)				
Type of unit[a]	1980	Percent of subtotal[b]	1984[c]	Percent of subtotal	Percent change
Departments					
Legislative set-aside	$46.8	40	$34.0	47	−27
Internal budget	62.5	54	37.6	52	−40
Other	7.5	6	0.7	1	−91
Subtotal	**116.8**	**100**	**72.3**	**100**	
Agencies					
Legislative set-aside	.5	4	0	•	•
Internal budget	10.3	91	11.1	99	8
Other	.6	5	.1	1	−83
Subtotal	**11.4**	**100**	**11.2**	**100**	
Total	**128.1**		**83.5**		**−35**

[a]This table includes data from only those units reporting in both 1980 and 1984.

[b]Percentages do not necessarily add to 100 due to rounding.

[c]Constant 1980 dollars.

In block grant-affected departments, the major source of evaluation funds in 1980 as well as in 1984 was legislative set-asides. While the actual dollar allocations stemming from set-asides declined by 37 percent, set-asides grew as a percentage of the overall total, from 46 to 60 percent. This increased reliance on set-asides was due to the elimination of other sources (e.g., intergovernmental transfers) and reductions in funds stemming from internal budgets.

Across all non-block grant departments, internal budgets in 1980 and 1984 were the dominant funding source in both years. The share of evaluation support ascribed to legislative set-asides increased from 29 to 33 percent, and unlike units affected by block grants, the amount of funding from set-asides increased by only 3 percent. In general, for these units, 1984 budgetary support still flows through the same mechanisms, roughly in the same proportions as in 1980, but funding from internal budgets has been substantially reduced.

While only about 1 in 5 units had any set-aside funding in 1980, the pattern of results suggests that legislative set-asides have formed a "floor" for departments, especially those administering programs affected by block grants. That is, in these departments, internal budget allocations did not compensate for set-aside reductions and indeed decreased more rapidly than the set-asides themselves.

We interpret this as reflecting the priority the administration wished to give evaluation supported by internal funds. However, we might reasonably expect that the Congress's requirements for continuing oversight-related information would produce a relatively stable pattern of demand for evaluation products, as compared to the changing management-oriented needs of the executive branch, which tend to reflect the priorities of a particular President or agency head. To the extent that information about programs managed by departments is important to the Congress, these observations suggest that the set-asides— among other mechanisms (e.g., special mandates, reporting requirements)—may provide an ensured flow of information, while the internal budgets give agency leadership flexibility in determining the emphasis to be given to evaluation.

On What Funds Were Spent

The funds reported as allocated to evaluation were spent in different ways for departments and agencies. In 1984, departments spent 24% of total evaluation expenditures on personnel and allocated most of their funds (65%) to contracts. Agencies spent 85 percent on personnel and

about 6 percent on contracts. Relative to 1980 evaluation units in departments showed little change in allocations, while in the agencies the proportion allocated to personnel increased and that to contracts decreased.

Cost of Evaluations

With regard to evaluation costs, about 80 percent of all evaluations underway cost $100,000 or less in 1984; 15 percent cost between $100,000 and $499,999; and 5 percent, above $500,000 (see table 3.2). Compared to 1980, there was a shift toward conducting more evaluations that cost under $100,000. Because independent agencies reported in 1980 that 92 percent of all studies cost less than $100,000, the magnitude of the shift was larger for departments than the agencies. This represents both a proportionate and an absolute change.

In terms of procurements, in 1984, for departments about 26 percent of all evaluation contracts were sole source, up from the 17 percent reported in 1980. Agencies decreased their proportion of sole source awards, although in both years, few of the studies were conducted externally.

Table 3.2: Costs and Types of Evaluations, 1980 and 1984[a]

	Number of evaluations									
	Under $100,000		$100,000 - $499,999		$500,000 - $999,999		$1 million or more		Total evaluations	
Category of unit and type of evaluation	**1980**	**1984**	**1980**	**1984**	**1980**	**1984**	**1980**	**1984**	**1980**	**1984**
In departments and agencies[b]										
Internal	774	1,112	123	111	1	6	7	0	905	1,229
(% of total)	(77)	(82)	(40)	(43)	(3)	(20)	(13)	(0)	(65)	(73)
External	224	243	184	149	36	24	48	44	492	460
(% of total)	(22)	(18)	(60)	(57)	(97)	(80)	(87)	(100)	(35)	(27)
Contracts	206	215	169	120	33	22	46	42	454	399
Competitive	158	146	142	99	30	20	40	40	370	305
Sole-source	48	69	27	21	3	2	6	2	84	94
Federal cooperative agreements and grants	18	28	15	29	3	2	2	2	38	61
Total	**998**	**1,355**	**307**	**260**	**37**	**30**	**55**	**44**	**1,397**	**1,689**
(% of year total)	**(71)**	**(80)**	**(22)**	**(15)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(100)**	**(100)**
In departments:										
Internal	396	535	100	84	1	6	7	0	504	625
(% of subtotal)	(70)	(73)	(37)	(38)	(3)	(20)	(13)	(0)	(54)	(60)
External	166	197	172	144	36	24	47	44	421	409
(% of subtotal)	(30)	(27)	(63)	(62)	(97)	(80)	(87)	(100)	(46)	(40)
Contracts	149	171	157	115	33	22	45	42	384	350
Competitive	119	105	132	95	30	20	39	40	320 (83)	260 (74)
Sole-source	30	66	25	20	3	2	6	2	64 (17)	90 (26)
Federal cooperative agreements and grants	17	26	15	29	3	2	2	2	37	59
Subtotal	**562**	**732**	**272**	**228**	**37**	**30**	**54**	**44**	**925**	**1034**
(% of year subtotal)	**(61)**	**(71)**	**(29)**	**(22)**	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(6)**	**(4)**	**(100)**	**(100)**

Category of unit and type of evaluation	Number of evaluations									
	Under $100,000		$100,000 - $499,999		$500,000 - $999,999		$1 million or more		Total evaluations	
	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984
In agencies:										
Internal	378	577	23	27	0	0	0	0	401	604
(% of subtotal)	(87)	(93)	(66)	(84)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(85)	(92)
External	58	46	12	5	0	0	1	0	71	51
(% of subtotal)	(13)	(7)	(34)	(16)	(0)	(0)	(100)	(0)	(15)	(8)
Contracts	57	44	12	5	0	0	1	0	70	49
Competitive	39	41	10	4	0	0	1	0	50 (81)	45 (92)
Sole-source	18	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	20 (29)	4 (8)
Federal cooperative agreements	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Subtotal (% of year subtotal)	**436 (92)**	**623 (95)**	**35 (7)**	**32 (5)**	**0 (0)**	**0 (0)**	**1 (0)**	**0 (0)**	**472 (100)**	**655 (100)**

[a]Figures include all evaluations — started, ongoing, or completed — during FY 1980 or 1984. Cost estimates include total resources expended, regardless of funding source or fiscal year in which funds were obligated. Units which had a cost accumulation system used it in calculating costs of internal evaluations. Other units estimated costs of internal evaluations using all associated costs, including salaries, personnel benefits and compensation, training, ADP, printing, travel, and indirect costs. Estimates of the costs of external evaluations include all costs associated with issuing, monitoring, and using results of the contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, as well as its direct cost.

[b]This table summarizes data provided only by units—in both departments and agencies—which reported evaluation activities in both 1980 and 1984.

Internal and External Studies

In 1984, 1,229 evaluations, or 73 percent of all studies underway, were conducted internally—a 36 percent increase from 1980, when 905 evaluations or 65 percent of all studies underway were conducted internally. As shown in table 3.2, it was the increase in number of internal studies, and not a decline in the costs of external evaluations, that accounted for most of the shift toward less costly studies.

The shift toward internal studies was greatest for units in agencies, which already were conducting much of their work through internal evaluations. That is, changes since 1980 accentuated what agencies were already doing with regard to reliance on internal versus external studies. The cumulative results, however, were to increase dependence on internal sources of information to the point where by 1984 almost three-quarters of all studies were being conducted by department or agency staff.

Human Resources

With the shift towards internal evaluations and non-competitive awards, a skilled workforce is particularly important in order to maintain the quality of information available to the Congress, management and the public. For units that maintained an evaluation function, we found that reductions in staff were managed primarily by attrition-without-replacement and reorganization, although some units were affected by reductions-in-force. We also found that of the current evaluation workforce about 43 percent were trained in the social sciences, about 26 percent in business or public administration and about 30 percent in other fields. New units have tended to hire fewer social scientists and more business or public administration majors.

How Reductions Were Managed

Between 1980 and 1984, the number of professional evaluation staff decreased from 1,507 to 1,179, a net loss of 328. Closer inspection of this change at the evaluation-unit level of analysis shows that it resulted from increases for some units and decreases for others. That is, the increase of 292 professional staff for some units did not offset the decrease of 620 staff for others.

We were not able to determine how these losses were managed for the biggest single source: the 515 reported in 1980 by units no longer in operation or conducting evaluations in 1984. We could, however, examine data from the units which reported evaluation activities in both 1980 and 1984. More units lost staff—and reported more staff reductions—by attrition than by other methods. Reorganization was almost as often reported; relatively fewer units were affected by RIFs and associated bumping or retreating actions.[1] Units could be and were affected, of course, by more than one type of change. Most evaluation officials reported that staff losses had had a negative effect on their ability to conduct program evaluations. "Bumping" and "retreating," while less frequent, were also reported as disruptive.

Educational Background of Evaluation Staff

In 1980 and 1984, most evaluation staff held degrees at at least the Bachelor's level. Within this group, however, the proportion reported as holding advanced degrees increased from 59 percent overall to 66 percent overall. The proportion with a Master's degree increased from 35 percent to 40 percent; the proportion of those with doctorates increased

[1]In reduction-in-force, replacements tend to accompany losses, as senior staff "retreat" from higher-level positions eliminated by a general staff reduction and "bump" more junior staff to take their places. Bumping and retreating, then, are two parts of the same process of staff rearrangement among available positions.

from 22 to 24 percent. That is, although absolute numbers of staff declined from 1980 to 1984, the proportion of staff with advanced degrees increased. To the extent that holding an advanced degree indicates greater competence, it can be argued that the 1984 evaluation staff were better qualified than in 1980. For evaluation units in operation both years, 60 percent of evaluators held advanced degrees in 1980 compared to 67 percent in 1984; among new units, 59 percent held advanced degrees; among units no longer in operation in 1984, 57 percent of their staff in 1980 had advanced degrees.

With regard to fields of expertise, we found no aggregate changes between 1980 and 1984. In 1984, 43 percent of the staff with advanced degrees were social scientists, 26 percent were business or public administrators, and 30 percent held degrees in other fields such as law, statistics, medicine and engineering. New units, however, had fewer social scientists (about 31 percent) and more business or public administration majors (about 30 percent) than did units reporting in both years, a shift consistent with a move toward more management-oriented studies.

Responsibilities

We examined how professional staff spent their time, using three different indicators. These were (1) median percent of staff time spent on planning, internal evaluations, external evaluations, and dissemination; (2) median staff days spent on various monitoring tasks for external evaluations; and (3) time spent on administrative, financial and substantive issues.

What staff did depended on where they were. Evaluators in department units affected by block grants primarily worked on external evaluations in both 1980 and 1984, although median time spent monitoring ongoing studies dropped from 35 percent to 15 percent. Staff in department units not affected by block grants spent most of their time on internal evaluations in both years as did staff in agencies. Staff in agencies increased time spent on internal studies, however, from 50 percent to 60 percent since 1980. To the extent that patterns of allocation of staff time are associated with similar types of information products, the cumulative result is likely to be a reduction in external studies and a concentration on internal studies that often are aimed at management and neither disseminated nor available externally.

Evaluation Products and Procedures

Who will receive evaluative information? So far we have reported that units increasingly have emphasized internally conducted evaluation studies. We turn now to actual products resulting from these studies. In general, we found that in 1984, units in departments produced fewer internal and external reports; agencies, however, increased their internal reports notably, while external reports declined somewhat. Thus, executive branch efforts had shifted overall toward internally produced information, and fewer reports were produced by outside contractors.

We found also that the reasons for conducting evaluations had shifted somewhat: increasingly, department and agency officials are being served; in 1984, only 9 percent were in response to legislation or a congressional committee, as compared with 12 percent in 1980. Studies that serve the Congress, the administration and the public form a whole that supports management, oversight and general information purposes. But the federal evaluation system in 1984, relative to 1980, seems to have shifted toward internal management support, at the expense of oversight or public information.

Types of Evaluation Products

Evaluation information can be reported in a variety of ways and in different formats. In this section we describe the number of evaluation products, types of evaluation products and at whose request studies were initiated. Evaluation products differ from the number of evaluation studies underway reported earlier. As the material results of studies, products may come in multiple forms; furthermore, they may be completed some time after the analysis and writing stages of a study have been finished.

Aggregate Product Profile

Considering only those units reporting evaluation activities in fiscal years 1980 and 1984, there was a 23% reduction in the number of evaluation products (2,114 in 1980 versus 1,619 in 1984; see table 5.1). When we disaggregate these figures, taking into account whether the products stem from internal or external studies, type of evaluation unit and type of product, the production across subgroups is markedly different.

Table 5.1: Types of Evaluation Products, 1980 and 1984[a]

Category	Internal/ external and fiscal year	Technical reports	Non-technical reports	Letter reports to Congress	Oral briefings	Policy memos or directives	Other	Total
In departments:	Internal:							
	1980	234 (34)	161 (23)	19 (3)	169 (24)	93 (13)	15 (2)	**691 (100)**
	1984	259 (37)	123 (18)	6 (1)	221 (32)	58 (8)	26 (4)	**693 (100)**
	External:							
	1980	289 (36)	165 (21)	31 (4)	209 (26)	75 (9)	25 (2)	**794 (100)**
	1984	101 (35)	55 (20)	15 (5)	83 (30)	22 (8)	5 (3)	**281 (100)**
	Subtotal:							
	1980	523 (35)	326 (22)	50 (3)	378 (25)	168 (11)	40 (2)	**1,485 (100)**
	1984	360 (37)	178 (18)	21 (2)	304 (31)	80 (8)	31 (3)	**974 (100)**
In agencies	Internal:							
	1980	137 (24)	143 (25)	16 (3)	211 (37)	68 (12)	0 (0)	**575 (100)**
	1984	82 (13)	370 (59)	1 (0)	75 (12)	92 (15)	2 (0)	**622 (100)**
	External:							
	1980	20 (37)	12 (22)	0 (0)	16 (30)	6 (11)	0 (0)	**54 (100)**
	1984	13 (57)	2 (9)	4 (17)	3 (13)	0 (0)	1 (4)	**23 (100)**
	Subtotal:							
	1980	157 (25)	155 (25)	16 (3)	227 (36)	74 (12)	0 (0)	**629 (100)**
	1984	95 (15)	372 (58)	5 (1)	78 (12)	92 (14)	3 (0)	**645 (100)**
Total	Internal:							
	1980	371 (29)	304 (24)	35 (3)	380 (30)	161 (13)	15 (1)	**1,266 (100)**
	1984	341 (26)	493 (37)	7 (1)	296 (32)	150 (11)	28 (2)	**1,315 (100)**
	External:							
	1980	309 (36)	177 (21)	31 (4)	225 (27)	81 (9)	25 (3)	**848 (100)**
	1984	114 (37)	57 (19)	19 (6)	86 (28)	22 (7)	6 (2)	**304 (100)**
	Total:							
	1980	**680 (32)**	**481 (23)**	**66 (3)**	**605 (29)**	**242 (11)**	**40 (2)**	**2,114 (100)**
	1984	**455 (28)**	**550 (34)**	**26 (2)**	**382 (23)**	**172 (11)**	**34 (2)**	**1,619 (100)**

[a]Note that the number of products does not equal the number of evaluation studies reported in chapter 2. Figures in parentheses are percents of yearly totals. For comparison purposes, this table presents only data from units which reported evaluation activities in both 1980 and 1984.

Internal vs External Evaluations

Products resulting from external evaluations dropped by 64 percent, from 848 products to 304. The declines were uniform across types of products such as technical reports and oral briefings. In contrast, the aggregate number of products from internal evaluations rose slightly, from 1,266 to 1,315.

Types of Products

With regard to shifts in the types of products, the main change between 1980 and 1984 was a small decrease in the proportion of technical reports and a sizeable increase in the number of non-technical reports. The increase in non-technical reports stems primarily from internal

evaluation studies conducted within agencies. Units within departments maintained their 1980 balance between technical and non-technical products.

Department vs. Agency

As table 5.1 indicates, departments and agencies had quite different results. Products resulting from internal studies remained relatively stable within departments, the exception being a notable increase in oral briefings. The biggest losses were associated with external evaluations, which declined from 794 to 281. The pattern of losses was consistent across product types.

Agencies, on the other hand, reported an increase in products from internal evaluations, from 575 to 622, with much greater reliance on non-technical reports in 1984 than in 1980 (370 vs 143, respectively, up 159 percent). With the exception of letter reports to the Congress, numbers of all product types decreased for external evaluations supported by the agencies.

Sources of Requests for Evaluations

The nature of the evaluation product is partially determined by who initiates the request, the type of question(s) asked, staff resources, the nature of the relevant program(s), and other organizational concerns.

For those units reporting in both 1980 and 1984, requests for evaluation studies differed between department and agency units (see table 5.2). In particular, of the evaluations reported by units within departments, in 1984 the majority were conducted either at the request of top officials (45 percent) or of program personnel (21 percent). The remaining requests stemmed from the Congress (11 percent), were self-initiated studies (15 percent) or came from other sources (7 percent). In contrast, evaluators in agencies were clearly responding in the main to one group. Of the 689 studies reported, top agency officials had requested 476 studies, or 69 percent. Requests from program personnel and self-initiated studies accounted for 14 and 11 percent of the requests, respectively, and the Congress was a negligible source, according to our respondents.

Table 5.2: Sources of Evaluation Mandates or Requests, 1984

	Number of evaluations (% of category total)						
Category of unit[a]	Legislation or congressional committee	OMB or executive order	Top agency officials	Program personnel	Self-initiated	Other	Total evaluations
In departments:	123 (11%)	42 (4%)	491 (45%)	228 (21%)	164 (15%)	38 (3%)	1,086
In agencies	29 (4%)	7 (1%)	476 (69%)	94 (14%)	77 (11%)	6 (1%)	689
Total	**152 (9%)**	**49 (3%)**	**967 (54%)**	**322 (18%)**	**241 (14%)**	**44 (2%)**	**1,775**

[a]Includes only units which reported evaluation activities in both FY 1980 and 1984.

Influences on How Evaluations Are Conducted

We analyzed the reasons given us by agency officials for choosing internal or external evaluations. The most commonly cited reason (given by about 82 percent of the units) in both 1980 and 1984 for choosing internal evaluations was availability of skilled staff in the evaluation unit. In both years, the most commonly cited reasons for choosing external evaluations were unavailability of skilled staff (87 percent in 1984); the credibility and technical quality of the external unit (78 percent in 1984); and limited resources (78 percent in 1984).

With regard to data availability, use of secondary data sources was reported to have increased between 1980 and 1984, but only a few units reported adverse effects of reductions in federal data collection activities.

In terms of time required to complete evaluations, as table 5.3 shows, the proportion of short-turn-around studies requiring less than six months to complete increased from 47 to 54 percent of all studies. This seems congruent with the increase in internal studies, particularly in agencies.

Table 5.3: Duration of Internal and External Evaluations

Category of unit and type of evaluation[a]	Number of evaluations							
	Under 6 months		6 to 12 months		13 to 24 months		More than 2 years	
	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984
All categories								
Internal	604	913	155	187	101	127	46	31
(% of total)	(67)	(73)	(17)	(15)	(11)	(10)	(5)	(2)
External	46	40	143	221	175	153	127	81
(% of total)	(9)	(8)	(29)	(45)	(35)	(31)	(26)	(16)
Total	**650**	**953**	**298**	**408**	**276**	**280**	**173**	**112**
(% of year total)[b]	**(47)**	**(54)**	**(21)**	**(23)**	**(20)**	**(16)**	**(12)**	**(6)**
In departments								
Internal	310	373	93	136	71	96	31	20
(% of subtotal)	(61)	(60)	(18)	(22)	(14)	(15)	(6)	(3)
External	34	22	131	191	129	129	126	70
(% of subtotal)	(8)	(7)	(31)	(45)	(31)	(31)	(30)	(17)
Subtotal	**344**	**404**	**224**	**327**	**200**	**225**	**157**	**90**
(% of year subtotal)	**(37)**	**(39)**	**(24)**	**(31)**	**(22)**	**(22)**	**(17)**	**(9)**
In agencies								
Internal	294	540	62	51	30	31	15	11
(% of subtotal)	(73)	(87)	(15)	(8)	(7)	(5)	(4)	(2)
External	12	9	12	30	46	24	1	11
(% of subtotal)	(17)	(12)	(17)	(41)	(65)	(32)	(1)	(15)
Subtotal	**306**	**549**	**74**	**81**	**76**	**55**	**16**	**22**
(% of year subtotal)	**(65)**	**(78)**	**(16)**	**(11)**	**(16)**	**(8)**	**(3)**	**(3)**

[a]Includes only units which reported evaluation activities in both 1980 and 1984

[b]For data on total evaluations by type (internal, external, and form of external), see table 3.2

These data are also consistent with other findings reported in this chapter and earlier chapters: a shift toward less expensive studies (costing less than $100 thousand), increased use of secondary data sources, and increasing dependence on internal staff to do work undertaken at the request of department or agency officials.

There may be some benefits in this shift. The skills of internal evaluators may have been underutilized in the past; evaluations that were longer and larger than necessary may have been undertaken in earlier years because the money was there; the priority set on information for agency management and policy development may have been too low; and the shift to block grants may appropriately have led to a decline in studies of affected programs. To the extent, however, that program effectiveness studies typically take longer and are more expensive than

internal studies, and that external studies are more often aimed at program effectiveness than at program processes and are more likely to be routinely available for scrutiny, information needed by the Congress and the public about the effectiveness of federal programs and policies may have been relatively undervalued and underproduced by executive branch evaluation units in 1984.

Influence of OMB

With regard to evaluation unit relations with OMB, evaluation officials reported experiencing delays of up to 46 weeks for OMB to complete the data collection instrument review process, but OMB was not said to have increased notably the time it took to approve a data collection instrument (a median of 8 weeks in 1980 and 10 in 1984) nor was OMB reported to require more modifications of those measures. That is, overall, the effect of OMB on the processes for conducting evaluations was not reported to have changed appreciably since 1980.

Reported Uses and Dissemination of Evaluations

In previous chapters, we have reported the declines in external evaluations, and the increases in internal evaluations. We have indicated that the primary reasons these typically low cost and short-term studies were initiated were to meet the needs of top officials and program managers. In line with this pattern of results, we found that reported use has increased, particularly use of internal studies by program managers and top officials, while public dissemination efforts have received fewer funds and lower priority. In this chapter we examine reported use of these studies and dissemination efforts.

Reported Use

We asked evaluation managers about the extent to which their evaluation products are used. These are the managers' perceptions; we have no independent information about utilization. In 1984, the evaluators were highly aware of use by program personnel and top agency officials; they were typically not aware of use by the Congress. This was also true in 1980, but awareness of use by agency officials increased by 1984 while awareness of use by the Congress did not.

Types of Use

We asked evaluation officials about how evaluations were used. Five types of use were reported. These were:

- acting on specific recommendations resulting from the evaluation;
- taking specific actions based on information resulting from the evaluation;
- using the results to reduce uncertainty or to reinforce prior thinking;
- using results to increase general knowledge about the topic or to see issues differently; and
- using results strategically to persuade others or to support one's own position.

The evaluators reported that program personnel and top agency officials used evaluations in all these ways, but particularly to act on specific recommendations. Between 1980 and 1984, reported use increased for department and agency units, particularly by program personnel, and particularly for actions on specific recommendations. Not surprisingly, as shown in table 6.1, 1984 respondents generally reported somewhat closer working relationships than in 1980 with program managers and little change in working relationships with the Congress or the research community.

Table 6.1: Changes in Working Relations With Users, 1980 to 1984[a]

User of evaluation research	Mean Response: Department units	Mean Response: Agency units	Mean Response: All units
1. Program managers	2.2 (66)	2.3 (25)	2.2 (91)
2. Agency officials	2.3 (65)	2.5 (25)	2.4 (90)
3. Congress or OMB	2.9 (63)	2.6 (24)	2.8 (87)
4. Researchers or analysts	2.8 (61)	3.0 (23)	2.9 (84)
5. Other users	2.0 (1)	• (0)	2.0 (1)

[a]Since 1980, unit has tended to work:
1. Much more closely,
2. Somewhat more closely,
3. At about the same level of interaction,
4. Somewhat less closely, or
5. Much less closely.

This table summarizes data reported in 1984 by units which indicated evaluation activities in both 1980 and 1984. Numbers in parentheses are numbers of responding cases.

Dissemination

Dissemination has never been a major evaluation expense. In 1980, about $1.9 million was spent on dissemination while in 1984, about $850,000 (in constant 1980 dollars) was spent. In both years, this represented only about 1 percent of all funds. The proportionate stability, however, reflected in absolute terms a 48 percent decline in constant dollars for departments and an 82 percent decline for agencies—or about 55 percent overall.

Staff time spent on dissemination, in contrast, was relatively great (10 percent median value) in both 1980 and 1984. This was as much time as we were told professional staff spent in planning and more than was spent in monitoring.

Efforts to Increase Use of Evaluation Results

Effective utilization of the results of an evaluation is in large part dependent upon the quality of relations the evaluation producer enjoys with the user, and the ability of the producer to share results with as many potential users as possible. A variety of methods are available for working toward these objectives. Information on the application of these methods by federal evaluation units can provide evidence on the degree to which evaluation units' actual reported activities to enhance use are compatible with their perceptions of improved use.

In both 1980 and 1984, of the eleven approaches reported, notifying potential users that reports or documents were available and involving the user in planning the evaluations were the most widely used methods of trying to increase use of evaluation results. In contrast, conducting seminars for potential users and national networking were the least frequently used. In general, "buy-in" strategies which involved the user in planning and conducting the evaluation increased, while other strategies aimed at potential users, such as oral briefings or technical assistance, decreased in frequency or remained constant for these units. Another indication of moderated efforts to disseminate results is a shift in the frequency of public listing of completed evaluations. Annual listings, or listings only as circumstances require, increased slightly, while more frequent announcements generally were somewhat less commonly used than they were in 1980. Some units reported, however, use of new information technologies (such as computer-readable data bases) to assist in making evaluative information more widely available.

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Conclusions, Matter for Congressional Consideration, Agency Comments and Our Response

In the aggregate, our review of federal evaluation activities in non-defense departments and agencies reveals one overall improvement (in levels of staff education) and substantial overall loss:

- in the number of units engaged in program evaluation;
- in fiscal resources, professional staff and products;[1] and
- in information about the extent and nature of program evaluations themselves.

However, despite these reductions, the number of evaluation studies either planned, ongoing, or completed remained roughly comparable between 1980 and 1984, suggesting continued executive branch interest in program evaluations.

Those evaluation studies which were being conducted were more likely to be internal than external, somewhat more likely to be awarded by sole source rather than through competition and more likely to be initiated by and disseminated to top officials and program managers than in 1980. Each of these are relatively small shifts, any one of which is not dramatic in magnitude. Cumulatively, however, they form a pattern. To the extent that external and competitively awarded studies are more public, more technical, more results-oriented (i.e., more likely to be concerned with program effectiveness than internal studies) and better disseminated to potential users, the balance has shifted since 1980 away from studies that can provide a basis for oversight and judgments about program and policy effectiveness.

Loss of Information on Evaluations

At present, program evaluation activities in federal departments and agencies are not being reported by OMB. The rescission of Circular A-117 in 1983 ended an annual reporting system that identified, among other things, which agencies and departments were engaged in program evaluation, how much money was being invested and what staffing levels existed.

As described in chapter 1, the enumeration of units to which our surveys were mailed had to be constructed through various sources. Moreover, the 1984 survey itself served as the final stage of the enumeration of units. That is, merely to derive a simple count of the number of

[1]Evaluation studies (projects) are to be distinguished from evaluation products (reports, briefings, etc.). Since a single study may be the source of multiple products, reported figures for studies and products are not equal.

units required considerable work. We believe this lack of readily accessible information—on who is conducting program evaluations in what areas of public policy—is likely to weaken oversight and impede planning.

Changes in Evaluation Resources and Products

In 1980, 180 units in non-defense departments and agencies responded that they engaged in program evaluation activities. In 1984, 133 reported similar activities. This represents a 26 percent decline since 1980. This reduction was entirely accounted for by losses within departments; the number of evaluation units within agencies remained relatively stable (an 8 percent increase, from 40 to 43 units).

While 15 new units were identified, 66 (or about 37 percent) of those reporting evaluation activities in 1980 changed their orientation away from program evaluation, were reorganized or were abolished. Approximately one-fourth of these units were previously housed in cabinet-level departments with responsibility for major social programs.

Funds for evaluation decreased from $177.4 million in 1980 to $110.9 million in 1984 (in constant 1980 dollars), a 37 percent reduction; this contrasts with a 4 percent increase over the same period for these units' departments and selected agencies. The number of professional evaluation staff decreased from 1,507 to 1,179, a 22 percent loss. In contrast, the reduction in the overall number of nondefense federal workers was approximately 6 percent. Despite these changes, the number of evaluations slipped only slightly downward, from 2,362 to 2,291, a 3 percent loss, giving an initial impression of an improvement in efficiency. Closer inspection of the nature and scope of evaluation activities in 1984 relative to 1980 does not, however, support a conclusion of increased efficiency.

We found that large decreases in number of studies were reported for some departments (e.g., Interior, Justice and Labor) while gains were reported for other departments (Agriculture, State, and Treasury). In the aggregate, independent agencies such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission increased their evaluation resources and the number of evaluation studies conducted.

Focusing more closely, we also found that departments whose programs were affected by block grants were most affected by reductions in staff and studies. Departments not involved in block grants, and independent agencies in general, were less affected.

Focusing still more closely, we have observed the following changes between 1980 and 1984 in federal evaluation studies, products, users, and staff:

- A larger proportion of evaluations were being conducted by internal staff, rather than by external evaluators;
- A larger proportion of studies cost less than $100 thousand to conduct;
- A larger proportion of evaluation products were in the form of non-technical reports;
- Working relations between evaluation personnel and various user groups had shifted somewhat in favor of top agency officials and program managers;
- Dissemination efforts were more concentrated on these two groups of users; and
- The staff producing these evaluations overall had higher educational qualifications in 1984 than did staff in 1980.

It is possible that these changes in types of products and primary users may be improvements in some respects. Skilled evaluators may be well utilized doing internal studies rather than primarily monitoring others' work; there may have been some valuable reassessments of the need for and returns from multi-million dollar, multi-year externally conducted evaluations in contrast to better use of existing data and short turnaround analyses; and the contribution of evaluation to policy review and improvement of management may appropriately have been given higher priority than studies of effectiveness directed outside as well as inside the agency or department.

However, a "balanced" program evaluation effort may be thought of as including both external and internal studies, and aimed at program oversight as well as program management. In comparison to 1980, we believe this balance among evaluations at the federal level has been shifted toward internal studies for program management and policy making. While we did not directly review the products themselves, our evidence on shifts toward less technical, more management-oriented studies; the substantial discrepancy between reported awareness of use of evaluation products between top officials and the Congress; and shifts toward internal studies suggest that evaluation personnel were attempting to be especially responsive to users within the departments and agencies.

The Evaluation Function and Oversight

In both 1980 and 1984, most resources for evaluation units came from internal budgets. In 1984, proportionately more resources had come from set-asides. Evaluation units appear to be highly sensitive to changes in administration policies and priorities, especially those of top officials. For example, evaluation functions lost proportionately more money and staff than the departments or agencies within which they are housed. While set-aside funds declined in terms of dollar allocations and relatively few units reported having them, they appeared to serve as a floor of resources above which agency discretionary funds were adjusted for those agencies that had such set-asides to begin with. Thus, the existence of the set-aside, while insufficient in itself to ensure that all the information required for congressional oversight will be produced, may well be a necessary condition for that production.

The changes we observe in the character of evaluation activities suggest that evaluative information—especially evidence on program results—may be less available to the Congress and the public. While the Congress does, in many instances, request agencies to provide such information, experience has shown that agencies may not be responsive to such requests.[2]

Matter for Congressional Consideration

In light of the changes in the nature and scope of program evaluation activities identified in this report, congressional committees should determine whether the agencies under their jurisdiction are developing and reporting the information needed by committees for their oversight responsibilities. This would include periodic reviews to ensure that agencies are fulfilling legislated mandates for the provision of evaluative information. To assure the availability of information required for oversight purposes, it might be necessary to specify—in law or accompanying committee reports—additional set-asides, mandated studies or improved dissemination of evaluation activities.

Agency Comments and Our Response

OMB expressed a number of concerns with our initial matter for consideration and other issues discussed in our draft. In OMB's view, program evaluation in the executive branch is intended to support internal agency decision-makers, not to produce evaluation information for the public and Congress. OMB concludes that since agency decision-makers have discretion to allocate resources to program evaluation, there is no

[2]See, for example, U.S. General Accounting Office, Post-Hospital Care: Efforts to Evaluate Medicare Prospective Payment Effects Are Insufficient, GAO/PEMD-86-10 (Washington, D.C.: June 1986).

threat, to them, of an information shortage. As such, OMB was opposed to one of our draft matters for consideration which suggest that the Congress consider establishing set-asides for results-oriented program evaluation in most federal evaluation units. Further, OMB believes that the changes we observed in the nature and scope of evaluation activities may be signs of positive improvement in the function, rather than reasons for concern. OMB also suggested that our initial matter for consideration regarding improved dissemination to the Congress and the public may increase paperwork burdens. Finally, OMB believes that GAO's method in this review underreports the amount of program evaluation activity, citing one instance in which studies were not reported to GAO by the department involved.

First, we agree that one purpose of program evaluation is program improvement. We do not agree that this purpose is well-served by focusing exclusively on the needs of internal agency decision-makers, because this can reduce important contributions concerning what improvements may be needed, were a broader audience readily informed of program performance. We believe that while the support of internal decision-making is an important objective for evaluation, there is danger in implying that it is primary among others. The identification of information needs by agency officials, to the exclusion of others, encourages the production of evaluations oriented narrowly to internal managers' interests. This can threaten the intellectual autonomy of evaluation studies, and ultimately their utility. Moreover, the likely long-term effect of targeting agency decision-makers as the evaluation audience is to discourage the production of results-oriented evaluations. Furthermore, we believe that the Congress has signalled a broader audience in authorizations for program evaluations, including, for example, congressionally mandated studies, some of which include the requirement that the reports be transmitted directly to the Congress without agency review.[3] Thus, we believe it was appropriate in both our 1980 and 1984 surveys to examine program evaluations for both internal and external audiences.

Second, we have clarified our matter for consideration by focusing on the potential need for individual committees to review whether they are receiving information from agencies under their jurisdiction adequate for oversight purposes. Since set-asides and reporting are included

[3]This requirement is illustrated by a 1976 congressional mandate for an evaluation by the National Institute of Education of vocational education programs. The mandate prohibited any review of the evaluation's reports outside of the Institute before their transmittal to the Congress (20 USC sec. 2563 [1976]).

among the several ways to help assure that information is available, a response to OMB's statements regarding evaluation set-asides is warranted. We have noted earlier in this report that the Congress and the public, as well as agency officials, are important target audiences for program evaluations. We continue to believe that set-asides for program evaluation can be a useful means of maintaining the availability of evaluative information for oversight. If evaluations were only tools for program management, there would be little reason for evaluation set-asides. These exist because a major function of evaluation is to inform oversight of programs. As overall fiscal resources for evaluation decline, the opportunity for managers to opt for little or no program evaluation is likely to become increasingly attractive. Externally fixed levels of spending for critical areas of evaluation may therefore be necessary in order to preserve the evaluation function in times of fiscal retrenchment. The obligation to expend funds through a set-aside need not threaten good planning and budgeting; indeed, routine congressional reviews of the activities associated with set-asides may be expected to encourage rational planning and operational efficiency.

Third, OMB stated that the changes we observe in the overall character of program evaluation should be viewed as a positive shift favoring the production of more "efficient, timely, sensitive, and useful" studies. We find this to be an unduly optimistic portrayal of the shift toward low-cost, short-turnaround, internal, non-technical studies. Use of relatively low-cost studies of short duration will appear to improve efficiency in the short term, by reducing administrative costs for evaluations. In the longer term, however, this may prove to be a false economy, since it is difficult to execute technically adequate evaluations of the results of major federal programs for less than a hundred thousand dollars. Without reliable knowledge of program results, how can managers and policy decision-makers come to appropriate judgments of the effectiveness of program efforts?

Fourth, enhanced dissemination of evaluation products does not necessarily require an increase in paperwork burdens, since such enhancement may involve methods other than simple expansion of the number of published copies of reports. Improved dissemination may involve, for example, more precise identification of the users of reports (thus reducing the number of copies distributed), or the use of briefer printed formats to convey evaluation results. Such alternatives, when included in overall dissemination plans, could result in paperwork savings over current practice. Even if we were to assume that enhanced dissemination were to result in increases in paperwork burdens, the costs of the

increased paperwork appropriately should be weighed against anticipated benefits of improved congressional and public knowledge of program processes and results.

Finally, citing our data from the Department of Education's Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation, OMB asserts that our use of estimated rather than actual fiscal resources for evaluation overstates the true 1980-to-1984 decline. Arriving at the "true" change in budget levels requires that the 1980 and 1984 figures be comparable. Since the 1980 survey asked for anticipated 1980 fiscal resources, we asked for comparable data in the 1984 survey. To compare budget figures for these two years, we used the data provided by survey respondents for anticipated fiscal resources for both years. We have clarified, in appropriate places in this report, that our budget figures for both years are based on estimates.

With regard to the Department of Commerce reporting more program evaluation activity when OMB asked Department officials than when officials reported to us, the case illustrates precisely our point on the difficulties of collecting data on the federal program evaluation effort. In the absence of any centralized list of evaluation units in the Department of Commerce, we interviewed the Director of the Department's Office of Program Planning and Evaluation, with the express purpose of gaining his assistance in identifying units within the Department in which program evaluations were being done. Speaking for the Department as a whole, this official stated that no program evaluation units existed in the Department. This statement was made after the official had reviewed a list of the Department's evaluation units included in our 1980 survey. In a follow-up letter, the official promised to seek information from other units in Commerce, including the Inspector General, and to forward this to us. We received no further information or response, and throughout our data collection process, including follow-ups, no evidence was received to suggest that other Department of Commerce units were carrying out activities which met the Circular A-117 definition used in our survey.

While OMB contacted the Department of Commerce to confirm that no program evaluation was being conducted (as had been reported to us), the studies listed in OMB's letter were obtained by calling staff in the Inspector General's Office, not the official we originally contacted. Therefore, each individual could have been using different definitions of program evaluation and different interpretations of A-117. Nevertheless, we have reviewed each of the reports that OMB lists as evaluations

produced by the Office of the Inspector General. Overall, these reports are management reviews or audits, and with a few exceptions they are not focused on particular programs. In no case do they assess the results of any programs on participants. As such, they do not alter our basic observations. In fact, had the Office of the Inspector General responded to our questionnaire, the data likely would have supported our observations about the shifts that have occurred.

Reviewing our methodology for enumerating evaluation units reveals that we targeted the questionnaires to the appropriate individuals (e.g., over three quarters were at or above the Deputy Director level or equivalent), that we relied on several sources of information, and that confirmations were obtained from units responding that they did not conduct evaluations as per A-117. Since the Director of Program Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Commerce characterized the studies conducted in the Inspector General's Office as "management evaluations" (and not program evaluations), we did not pursue the enumeration any further for the Department of Commerce. In reviewing all of the documentation on units, we found no other instance in which the Department official stated that no program evaluation (as per A-117) was being performed. We also have conducted additional analyses which show that the nonreporting of an entire department's evaluation units has little effect on the aggregate results, and does not change our findings or conclusions.

Evaluation Units: 1980 and 1984

The lack of uniform definitions and reporting standards for program evaluation activities conducted within the federal government makes it difficult to estimate, precisely, the number of operating evaluation units in departments and agencies. Despite these difficulties, our survey shows that since 1980, there has been a substantial decline in the number of evaluation units in non-defense federal departments and agencies. While part of this decline was offset by the emergence of new units, a large number of the units that were in operation in 1980 shifted their orientation away from program evaluation (as defined in Circular A-117; see chapter 1) or were abolished. Of those departments and agencies that maintained their evaluation function, organizational changes—primarily centralization—also reduced the number of active units in 1984 relative to 1980. Departments lost more evaluation units than did agencies. There was considerable variation among departments in the reduction of evaluation units, however.

Identifying the Number of Evaluation Units

Given the rescission of OMB Circular A-117, evaluation units had to be identified through a two-step process: the population of potential units was enumerated using available sources and through interviews with staff within departments and agencies; and whether or not each unit was actually involved in program evaluation during 1984 was ascertained by responses to the survey. Unlike the 1980 survey, in which 73 percent of the units on OMB's A-117 listings responded that they did perform program evaluation, in 1984 this percentage was much lower. That is, 47 percent of those units on our 1984 list of preliminarily identified units reported actually conducting program evaluation.

Number of Evaluation Units and Change Since 1980

In 1980, one hundred eighty (180) evaluation units within non-defense departments and agencies reported engaging in evaluation activities. In 1984, 133 units reported conducting program evaluation — a 26 percent decline since 1980. Closer inspection of this decline in the aggregate number of units shows that a 36 percent reduction in units within departments accounts for the overall reduction; units within agencies remained relatively constant (an 8 percent increase from 40 to 43).

On the other hand, as shown in table I.1, in 1984 a sizable number of units (99 of 133; 74 percent) reported a stable evaluation function between 1980 and 1984, although organizational rearrangements (e.g., centralization) resulted in fewer units in 1984 than in 1980 (99 versus

111, respectively). Further, the overall decline was offset by the emergence of 15 new units and the identification of 19 units whose history could not be confirmed.

Table I.1: Evaluation Units Reporting Activities in 1980 and 1984

Reporting status	1980	1984	Percent change
Reporting evaluation activities in 1980 and 1984			
Departments	84	71	−15
Agencies	27	28	+ 4
Subtotal	**111**	**99**	**−11**
New since 1980			
Departments	•	7	
Agencies	•	8	
Subtotal	•	**15**	
No longer in operation			
Departments	54	•	
Agencies	12	•	
Subtotal	**66**	•	
Status unknown			
Departments	2	12	
Agencies	1	7	
Subtotal	**3**	**19**	
Total	**180**	**133**	**−26**
Departments	**140**	**90**	**−36**
Agencies	**40**	**43**	**+8**
Units in mailout	246	281	
Responses received	231	274	
Response rates	94%	98%	

The largest contributor to the overall decline in the aggregate number of evaluation units were those 66 units reporting that they were no longer conducting program evaluation according to the OMB definition. That is, 37 percent of the 180 units reporting evaluation activities in 1980 either changed their orientation or were abolished. Of these, the majority (54 of 66) were units from one of the 12 cabinet-level departments.

Number of Evaluation Units in Departments and Agencies

It appears that not all evaluation units reported their activities in 1980 and 1984. Table I.2 shows that as many as 206 evaluation units were in operation in 1980; when surveyed in 1984, 141 appear to have been performing program evaluation activities. This represents a 32 percent decline. Whereas the number of agency evaluation units was reduced from 51 to 44 (a 14 percent decline), units within departments declined by 37 percent (dropping from 155 to 97).

All but one of the 12 non-defense departments reduced their number of evaluation units (see table I.2; the State Department continued operation of its single evaluation unit across both years). The magnitude of these reductions, across departments, was substantial. The Department of Commerce, for example, reported eight active evaluation units in 1980; in 1984 it reported maintaining no units performing evaluation according to OMB's A-117 definition (See OMB's comments in appendix III and our response in chapter 7). Across the remaining departments, reductions ranged from 18 percent to 64 percent. The Departments of Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Justice and Transportation lost 50 percent or more of their 1980 evaluation units. On the other hand, the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Labor and Treasury reduced their number of evaluation units by 33 percent or less.

Table I.2: Number of Evaluation Units in Each Department and in Agencies: 1980 and 1984[a]

	Year		Percent change
	1980	1984	
Departments			
Agriculture	22	18	−18
Commerce	8	0	−100
Education	5	4	−20
Energy	5	4	−20
Health and Human Services	42	32	−24
Housing and Urban Development	6	3	−50
Interior	16	10	−38
Justice	19	7	−63
Labor	9	6	−33
State	1	1	0
Transportation	11	4	−64
Treasury	11	8	−27
Agencies			
General Services Administration	15	13	−13
All Other Agencies	36	31	−14
Total	**206**	**141**	**−32**
Departments	**155**	**97**	**−37**
Agencies	**51**	**44**	**−14**

[a]Numbers of units are based on responses to 1980 and 1984 GAO surveys of program evaluation activities, and follow-up investigations of organizational changes between 1980 and 1984.

Organizational Change

As shown in table I.2, between 1980 and 1984 the total number of evaluation units within nondefense departments and agencies was reduced by 65, a 32 percent decline. Closer inspection of the processes underlying these changes suggests that the loss of 9 units can be accounted for through either centralization or decentralization of units within departments. Eight departments (Agriculture, Energy, HHS, HUD, Justice, Labor, Transportation, and Treasury) appear to have centralized their evaluation function, merging 38 units operating in 1980 into 24 in 1984. This form of administrative centralization was offset by the decentralization of 4 units reported in 1980 by units in three departments (Agriculture, HUD and Treasury) that became 9 units in 1984. Both of these forms of reorganization resulted in a net loss of 9 units. Additional units were either abolished or lost through other forms of administrative reorganization. Eleven of the 12 departments used one or more of these administrative mechanisms to reduce the number of active evaluation units.

Changes Due to Deviation From the OMB Definition of Evaluation

A portion of the reduction in evaluation activity was due to the changing nature of the field of program evaluation. Some units did not respond to our survey because they believed their current activities deviated from the definition of program evaluation used in our survey.

Over the past several years, the nature of evaluation has broadened beyond the definition used within OMB's Circular A-117. For example, the Program Evaluation Standards issued by the Evaluation Research Society (now the American Evaluation Association) describe six types of evaluations, ranging from program monitoring and process analyses through estimation of program effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis.

In open responses to the 1984 survey, this added breadth was also observed. A case in point is the Department of Commerce. In 1980, eight units in Commerce reported that they were engaged in program evaluation activities consistent with OMB's definition. By 1984, our liaison official in Commerce indicated that there were no evaluation units in operation that still fit the A-117 definition. In a letter documenting the reasons for not completing the survey, the official indicated that units within the Department of Commerce conducted some types of evaluation as part of the planning and monitoring function. Annually, they established program objectives and milestones, and tracked program progress with key managers.

Change in the nature and scope of evaluation activities were not limited to those units that did not respond to our questionnaire. For example, one respondent, in this case an official within the Environmental Protection Agency, made the following statement, in part, about the agency's evaluation activities:

"While we do have an organization called [the] Program Evaluation Division, nothing that we do can be properly classified as traditional program evaluation, nor is it fair to say that anything we do is not fundamentally aimed at program evaluation.

"We have come to the conclusion that program managers and top Agency officials already know of their operational problems; what they don't know is how to solve them. In our work, defining and diagnosing the management or program design problem is only the beginning of the work. Most of our effort is spent in creating solutions that managers and major policy makers can live with and call their own. We are an internal consulting firm to EPA, and we find we can be far more effective in this role than if we were to dedicate ourselves to the production of documents called 'program evaluations.' "

These examples show the diversity of activity that can be labeled program evaluation. In some instances, officials decided that their activities did not meet the requirements set out by the OMB definition and chose not to respond to the questionnaire. There are other situations, like the one described by the official at EPA, where the nature and scope of evaluation activities that were reported has changed.

The data and illustrations presented here show that program evaluation activities within non-defense departments and agencies were, by and large, subject to change and difficult to identify. Part of this instability appeared to be due to administrative reorganization ranging from centralization of the evaluation function to complete elimination of units. Part of the instability was also attributable to a broadening of the activities that fall under the rubric of program evaluation. The absence of relevant definitions of program evaluation activities —ones that capture the diversity of tasks that can be conducted —makes it difficult to establish precisely how many units were engaged in program evaluation activities. We found that because of the rescission of OMB Circular A-117, it has become much more difficult to get a clear understanding of who is doing what evaluations in which agency.

Response Histories, Total Resources, Number of Staff, and Number of Program Evaluations for Federal Program Evaluation Units in 1980 and 1984 Surveys

In this section, we list the program evaluation units within federal departments or agencies that participated in either the 1980 or 1984 studies. Participation means that these evaluation units were sent a survey questionnaire in 1980 and/or 1984 and they either (1) completed the questionnaire, or (2) stated by letter or telephone their reason(s) for not completing the questionnaire.

The evaluation units are listed alphabetically by department/agency, and within these by unit title. Department units are listed first, followed by agency units. Evaluation units that participated in both the 1980 and 1984 surveys are matched and listed together. Evaluation units that participated in only one of the two surveys are listed without a corresponding evaluation unit, and the matched entry is listed as "none". Each unit was given a letter code characterizing its response history across both survey years. In addition, units we identified as having undergone organizational centralization or decentralization are labelled with an additional letter code (See below for a description of the coding categories).

For each evaluation unit that reported, we have listed the total fiscal resources for fiscal year 1980 and/or 1984 (both in nominal dollars), the

total number of staff at the beginning of the fiscal year, and the total number of planned, ongoing or completed internal and external program evaluations. For example, in the Department of Agriculture, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service evaluation unit responded to the survey in both 1980 and 1984, status code "M". For 1980, the unit reported $116,000 in total fiscal resources, a staff of 3, 3 internal evaluations, and 0 external evaluations. In 1984, it reported $311,000, a staff of 5, 17 internal evaluations, and no external evaluations.

The following coding scheme was used for classifying the evaluation units according to response history:

A.	Response history suggests decentralization of the evaluation function between 1980 and 1984.
B.	Response history suggests centralization of the evaluation function between 1980 and 1984.
C.	1980: Questionnaire response (i.e., program evaluation activity was confirmed).
	1984: Department/agency reported that unit was not doing program evaluation.
D.	1980: Questionnaire response.
	1984: Department/agency reported that unit had been abolished since 1980.
E.	1980: Questionnaire response.
	1984: Department/agency reported that unit was no longer in operation.
F.	1980: Unit reported not doing program evaluation.
	1984: Department/agency liaison reported unit was not doing program evaluation by deleting it from 1984 mailing list.
G.	1980: Not on mailing list.
	1984: Questionnaire response, but unit confirmed as not newly organized since 1980.
H.	1980: Not on mailing list.
	1984: Department/agency liaison added unit to mailing list, but unit reported not doing program evaluation.
I.	1980: Not on mailing list, or reported not doing program evaluation.
	1984: Questionnaire response; unit confirmed as newly organized since 1980.
J.	1980: Not on mailing list, or reported not doing program evaluation.
	1984: Questionnaire response, with no retrospective reporting of 1980 fiscal or staff data, thus indicating unit began evaluation function since 1980.

K. 1980: Questionnaire response, or reported not doing program evaluation (Department of Commerce units).

1984: Department liaison reported entire department is no longer doing program evaluation.

L. 1980: Questionnaire response.

1984: Department/agency reported unit no longer doing program evaluation because of administrative reorganization.

M. 1980: Questionnaire response.

1984: Questionnaire response.

N. 1980: Unit reported not doing program evaluation.

1984: Unit reported not doing program evaluation.

O. 1980: Unit reported not doing program evaluation.

1984: Questionnaire response; evidence is inconclusive as to whether unit began evaluation function since 1980.

P. 1980: On mailing list, but no response.

1984: Questionnaire response; evidence is inconclusive as to whether unit began evaluation function since 1980.

Q. 1980: On mailing list, but no response.

1984: Reported not doing program evaluation.

R. 1980: Questionnaire response.

1984: No response.

S. 1980: Not on mailing list.

1984 No response.

T. 1980: No questionnaire response, but unit reported a modest level of program evaluation activity.

1984: No questionnaire response, but unit reported a modest level of program evaluation activity.

Table I.3 follows.

Table I.3: Response Histories, Total Resources (Estimated), Number of Staff, and Number of Program Evaluations Reported in 1980 and 1984, by Unit

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Agriculture							
1980	Agricultural Marketing Service	C	1980	172	7	5	0
1984	Agricultural Marketing Service		1984	•[c]	•	•	•
1980	Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service	J	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service		1984	250	8	60	0
1980	Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service	M	1980	116	3	3	0
1984	Animal & Plant Health Inspection		1984	311	5	17	0
1980	Civil Rights Division	C	1980	186	3	20	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Economics, Statistics & Cooperative Service	D	1980	378	7	18	3
1984	Economics Management Staff		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Farmers Home Administration	M	1980	581	4	9	4
1984	Farmers Home Administration		1984	300	6	4	1
1980	Federal Crop Insurance Corporation	M	1980	240	5	16	0
1984	Federal Crop Insurance Corporation		1984	802	10	19	0
1980	Food & Nutrition Service	M	1980	12529	13	8	0
1984	Food & Nutrition Service		1984	15000	47	3	25
1980	Food Safety & Quality Service	M	1980	112	3	0	0
1984	Food Safety & Inspection Service		1984	2059	38	89	1
1980	Foreign Agricultural Service	C	1980	50	1	4	0
1984	Foreign Agricultural Service		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Forest Service	M	1980	702	14	1	1
1984	Forest Service		1984	1083	7	9	2
1980	Manpower & Management Planning Division	E	1980	300	6	18	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Budget, Planning and Evaluation, Deputy Director	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Budget & Program Analysis, Deputy Director		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Budget, Planning and Evaluation, Director	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Budget & Program Analysis, Director		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Information Resources Management		1984	644	9	4	1
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of the Inspector General		1984	785	13	5	0

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Agriculture							
1980	Office of International Cooperation & Development	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of International Cooperation & Development		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Operations & Finance	M,A	1980	135	6	4	1
1984	Office of Finance & Management, Productivity & Evaluation Division		1984	239	10	25	0
1984	Office of Operations		1984	84	2	12	0
1984	Office of Finance & Management, Safety & Health Policy Division		1984	42	3	30	0
1980	Office of Personnel	E	1980	244	6	42	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Rural Development Policy		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization	C	1980	249	8	3	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Transportation	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Rural Electrification Administration	M	1980	116	3	20	0
1984	Rural Electrification Administration		1984	109	2	1	0
1980	Office of Safety & Health Management	L	1980	100	3	9	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Science & Education Administration	M,A	1980	1160	29	8	1
1984	Agricultural Research Service		1984	1000	7	•	•
1984	Extension Service		1984	1100	6	6	8
1980	Soil Conservation Service	M,B	1980	359	3	7	0
1980	Soil Conservation Service, Management Evaluation Division		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Soil Conservation Service		1984	500	7	5	0
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**17,828**	**124**	**195**	**10**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**24,408**	**180**	**289**	**38**
Department of Commerce							
1980	Assistant Secretary for Administration	K	1980	585	11	12	2
1980	International Trade Administration		1980	120	2	3	0
1980	Bureau of Economic Analysis		1980	150	2	15	2
1980	Bureau of the Census		1980	9753	•	5	0
1980	Maritime Administration		1980	100	5	2	0
1980	National Bureau of Standards		1980	458	4	1	3
1980	Economic Development Administration		1980	1750	8	3	10
1980	National Telecommunications & Information Administration		1980	85	1	1	2

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Commerce							
1980	Minority Business Development Agency		1980	•	•	•	•
1980	Patent & Trademark Office		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Assistant Secretary for Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**13,001**	**33**	**42**	**19**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	•	•	•	•
Department of Education							
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Bilingual Education		1984	3000	2	0	2
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Elementary & Secondary Education		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Evaluation & Program Management	L	1980	0	0	1	5
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Inspector General, Office of Policy Planning and Management Services		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Deputy Undersecretary for Management		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	National Institute of Education	J	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Institute of Education		1984	1500	•	0	4
1980	Division of Organizational Development	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Assistant Secretary for Planning and Budget/Technology and Analytic Systems	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Postsecondary Education		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Program Evaluation	M	1980	22700	32	7	107
1984	Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation[d]		1984	10882	27	0	11
1980	Office of Special Education	M	1980	1165	5	0	13
1984	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services		1984	5250	8	0	14
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Vocational & Adult Education		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**23,865**	**37**	**8**	**125**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**20,632**	**37**	**0**	**31**

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	External
Department of Energy							
1980	Albuquerque Operations Office	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Albuquerque Operations Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Chicago Operations Office	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Chicago Operations Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Conservation & Solar Application, Office of Assistant Secretary for Conservation & Solar Energy	P,B	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Conservation & Renewable Energy		1984	75	1	3	0
1980	Office of the Controller	Q	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of the Controller		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Defense Programs	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Defense Programs		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Economic Regulatory Administration	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Economic Regulatory Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Energy Information Administration	Q	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Energy Information Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Energy Research	Q	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Energy Research		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Idaho Operations Office	Q	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Idaho Operations Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Inspector General	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Inspector General		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Manpower Resources Management Division	P	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Manpower Resources Management Division		1984	64	3	2	1
1980	Nevada Operations Office	C	1980	35	1	9	0
1984	Nevada Operations Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Oak Ridge Operations Office	P	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Oak Ridge Operations Office		1984	60	1	2	0
1980	Assistant Secretary for Policy and Evaluation	C	1980	30	1	1	0
1984	Office of Policy, Safety, and Environment		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Procurement & Contracts Management	Q	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Procurement & Assistance Management Directorate		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	External
Department of Energy							
1980	Resource Applications	C	1980	4227	32	50	22
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Richland Operations Office	Q	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Richland Operations Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	San Francisco Operations Office	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	San Francisco Operations Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Strategic Petroleum Reserve	P	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Strategic Petroleum Reserve		1984	960	7	6	6
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**4,292**	**34**	**60**	**22**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**1,159**	**12**	**13**	**7**
Department of Health & Human Services							
1980	Administrative Compliance Branch	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Administration on Aging	C	1980	1700	2	0	5
1984	Administration on Aging		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	268	1	0	3
1984	National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health		1984	146	1	0	2
1980	National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	163	1	1	2
1984	National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health		1984	256	1	1	2
1980	National Institute of Arthritis, Metabolism & Digestive Diseases, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	280	4	4	3
1984	National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, Digestive, Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health		1984	73	1	1	2
1980	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Centers for Disease Control, Public Health Service	M	1980	1150	3	1	14
1984	Centers for Disease Control, Public Health Service		1984	579	1	3	11

Fiscal year	Government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Health & Human Services							
1980	National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	300	1	10	0
1984	National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, National Institutes of Health		1984	400	5	3	3
1980	Office of Child Support Enforcement, Social Security Administration	M	1980	100	3	0	1
1984	Office of Child Support Enforcement, Social Security Administration		1984	604	3	0	3
1980	Administration for Children, Youth & Families, Human Development Services	M	1980	4613	5	0	11
1984	Administration for Children, Youth & Families Human Development Services		1984	600	10	0	3
1980	Office of Civil Rights	E	1980	45	1	0	1
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	National Institute of Dental Research, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	310	1	0	2
1984	National Institute of Dental Research, National Institutes of Health		1984	150	1	4	3
1980	Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Human Development Services	R	1980	534	1	2	6
1984	Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Human Development Services		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	166	2	0	3
1984	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health		1984	601	2	0	3
1980	Division of Evaluation, Human Development Services	M,B	1980	800	6	0	9
1980	Research & Evaluation, Human Development Services		1980	•	•	•	•
1980	Assistant Secretary for Human Development Services		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Program Development, Human Development Services		1984	500	2	0	7
1980	National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	108	1	1	7
1984	National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health		1984	33	2	3	0

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Health & Human Services							
1980	Division of Family Assistance Studies, Social Security Administration	M	1980	1800	6	0	5
1984	Office of Family Assistance, Social Security Administration		1984	1470	12	3	4
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health		1984	115	•	0	2
1980	Food & Drug Administration, Office of Planning & Evaluation, Public Health Service	M,B	1980	372	13	9	0
1980	Food & Drug Administration, Public Health Service		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Food & Drug Administration, Associate Commissioner for Planning & Evaluation, Public Health Service		1984	272	6	7	0
1980	National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	70	2	5	2
1984	National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health		1984	80	2	6	0
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration		1984	2876	3	2	15
1980	Office of Assistant Secretary for Health, Planning & Evaluation, Public Health Service	M,B	1980	750	4	0	2
1980	Associate Administrator for Planning, Evaluation & Legislation, Public Health Service		1980	2100	23	1	22
1980	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Research, Statistics & Technology, Public Health Service		1980	•	•	•	•
1980	Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General, Public Health Service		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Planning & Evaluation, Public Health Service		1984	1130	2	0	16
1980	Health Resources Administration, Public Health Service	M	1980	4001	32	8	45
1984	Health Resources & Services Administration, Public Health Service		1984	3980	7	6	59
1980	Office of Hearing & Appeals, Social Security Administration	E	1980	776	17	33	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year	Government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Health & Human Services							
1980	National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	1500	5	2	19
1980	National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health	R	1984	1167	3	4	12
1980	Inspector General, Assistant Secretary, Health Care & Systems Review	R	1980	1600	40	43	0
1980	National Library of Medicine, National Institute of Health	M	1980	300	4	2	5
1984	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health		1984	515	6	6	3
1980	Office of Director, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	1340	3	3	10
	Office of Program Planning & Evaluation, National Institutes of Health		1984	2449	5	4	11
1980	Administration for Native Americans, Human Development Services	M	1980	485	1	0	2
1984	Administration for Native Americans, Human Development Services		1984	17	1	0	1
1980	National Institute of Neurological & Communicative Disorders & Stroke, National Institutes of Health	M	1980	232	1	0	1
1984	National Institute of Neurological & Communicative Disorders & Stroke, National Institutes of Health		1984	•	1	2	3
1980	Office of Planning & Coordination, Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA)	M	1980	710	3	0	2
	Program Analysis & Evaluation Studies, ADAMHA		1980	903	4	0	8
	National Institute on Drug Abuse, ADAMHA		1980	170	1	0	1
	National Institute of Mental Health, ADAMHA		1980	1500	2	1	14
1984	Associate Administrator for Planning, Policy Analysis & Legislation, ADAMHA		1984	1900	4	3	39
	National Institute of Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism, ADAMHA		1984	•	•	•	•
	National Institute on Drug Abuse, ADAMHA		1984	•	•	•	•
	National Institute of Mental Health, ADAMHA		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Health & Human Services							
1980	Office of Research, Demonstrations & Statistics, Health Care Financing Administration	C	1980	1450	5	2	6
1984	Office of Research & Demonstration, Health Care Financing Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Division of Research Resources, National Institutes of Health		1984	20	•	5	2
1980	Office of the Secretary	M	1980	8500	40	12	38
1984	Office of the Secretary		1984	8600	23	0	65
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**39,125**	**238**	**140**	**249**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**28,532**	**104**	**63**	**271**
Department of Housing and Urban Development							
1980	Community Planning & Development	D	1980	1975	50	48	5
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity	D	1980	100	5	2	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Policy Development & Program Evaluation	M A	1980	180	5	5	0
1984	Office of Program Analysis & Evaluation		1984	1246	18	3	0
1984	Division of Program Evaluation		1984	281	5	4	1
1980	Division of Policy Studies, Policy Development & Research	M B	1980	1483	14	6	0
1980	Evaluation Division, Policy Development & Research		1980	7611	12	6	25
1980	Assistant Secretary for Administration		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Assistant Secretary for Policy Development & Research		1984	6500	29	13	16
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**11,349**	**86**	**67**	**30**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**8,027**	**52**	**20**	**17**
Department of Interior							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Acquisition & Property Management, Branch of Evaluation & Management		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Acquisition & Property Management, Division of Real Property		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Acquisition & Property Management, Division of Safety Management		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Interior							
1980	Bureau of Mines	C	1980	650	12	8	5
1984	Bureau of Mines		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Congressional & Legislative Affairs		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Construction Management		1984	1100	9	9	22
1980	None	S	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Equal Opportunity		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Fish & Wildlife Service	C	1980	210	5	3	0
1984	Fish & Wildlife Service		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Geological Division, U S Geological Survey	E	1980	195	66	9	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	U S Geological Survey, Administrative Division	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Geological Survey, Chief Hydrologist		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Water Resources Division		1984	120	3	1	0
1980	U S Geological Survey, Office of Program Analysis	M	1980	124	4	5	0
1984	U S Geological Survey, Assistant Director for Programs		1984	35	1	12	0
1980	Office of Earth Sciences Application, U S Geological Survey	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Earthquake Studies, U S Geological Survey	E	1980	210	4	1	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Geochemistry & Geophysics, U S Geological Survey	E	1980	1023	2	1	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Heritage Conservation & Recreation	D	1980	•	•	57	2
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Financial Management		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Interior							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Services		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Management Research & Evaluation		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Planning, Oversight & Evaluation Staff		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Information Resources Management		1984	528	8	3	1
1980	Office of Inspector General	E	1980	2695	37	36	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Bureau of Land Management, Office of Program Evaluation	M	1980	245	7	34	0
1984	Bureau of Land Management, Division of Program Evaluation		1984	350	7	11	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Land Management, Branch of Program Evaluation & Support		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Land & Minerals Management		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Minerals Management Service		1984	350	7	26	0
1980	National Mapping Division	M	1980	120	4	2	0
1984	National Mapping Division		1984	47	1	4	0
1980	National Park Service	M	1980	0	6	1	0
1984	National Park Service		1984	150	5	3	0
1980	Office of National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska	E	1980	185	•	0	2
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Personnel Management Evaluation		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Policy Analysis		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of the Secretary, Office of Budget	E	1980	250	4	4	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of the Solicitor	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Surface Mining	M	1980	314	7	8	0
1984	Office of Surface Mining		1984	210	4	6	0

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Interior							
1980	Territorial & International Affairs	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of Water Research & Technology	E	1980	50	2	2	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Water & Water Power Resources Service	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Youth Programs, Operations		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Youth Programs, Division of Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**6,271**	**160 1**	**71**	**9**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**2,891**	**45**	**75**	**23**
Department of Justice							
1980	Antitrust Division, Office of Policy Planning	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Antitrust Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Bureau of Justice Statistics	C	1980	800	0	0	4
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Bureau of Prisons	M	1980	900	10	33	1
1984	Bureau of Prisons		1984	900	29	68	9
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Civil Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Civil Rights Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Community Relations Service	C	1980	•	4	4	0
1984	Community Relations Service		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Criminal Division, (Office of Policy Management Analysis)	C	1980	45	1	2	0
1984	Criminal Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Drug Enforcement Administration	M	1980	1853	22	10	0
1984	Drug Enforcement Administration		1984	520	12	7	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Executive Office for U.S. Trustees	C	1980	88	1	1	0
1984	Executive Office for U.S. Trustees		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year	Government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Justice							
1980	Federal Bureau of Investigation, Office of Planning & Evaluation	M,B	1980	3584	67	52	0
1980	Federal Bureau of Investigation Planning & Inspection Division		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Bureau of Investigation Inspection Division		1984	1230	14	23	0
1980	Immigration & Naturalization Service	M,B	1980	180	7	11	0
1980	Position of Personnel Management & Evaluation Branch		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Immigration & Naturalization Service		1984	364	8	15	0
1980	Office for Improvements in the Administration of Justice	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Information Systems Branch	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	INTERPOL, U.S. National Central Bureau		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Justice Management Division, Evaluation Staff	M,B	1980	715	11	12	0
1980	Justice Management Division, Office of Management & Finance		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Justice Management Division, Evaluation Staff		1984	1067	21	9	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Justice Management Div., Off. of Info. Technology		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Land & Natural Resources Division	C	1980	101	2	18	0
1984	Land & Natural Resources Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Program Development & Evaluation	E	1980	1500	4	1	9
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Office of Program & Resource Coordination, Office of Planning & Management	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Justice Assistance, Office of Planning & Management		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Legal Policy		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	U.S. Marshals Service	M	1980	217	3	3	0
1984	U.S. Marshals Service		1984	459	7	19	0
1980	National Institute for Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention	C	1980	3400	3	0	11
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Justice							
1980	National Institute of Justice	C	1980	3254	8	0	68
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	U.S. Parole Commission	M	1980	65	1	1	1
1984	U.S. Parole Commission		1984	100	1	4	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Tax Division, Office of the Comptroller		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Tax Division, Finance & Program Management Staff	E	1980	80	1	6	1
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**16,782**	**145**	**154**	**95**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**4,640**	**92**	**145**	**9**
Department of Labor							
1980	Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration & Management	M	1980	165	10	44	0
1984	Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration & Management		1984	12	2	5	0
1980	Employment Standards Administration	M	1980	6248	22	5	1
1984	Employment Standards Administration		1984	250	5	3	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Employment Standards Administration, Office of Federal Contract Compliance		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Employment & Training Administration, Office of Program Evaluation	M	1980	12600	26	5	23
1980	Employment & Training Administration, Division of Management Analysis		1980	218	12	11	1
1984	Employment & Training Administration, Office of Strategic Planning & Policy Development		1984	4700	5	2	21
1980	Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Office of Foreign Economic Research	C	1980	135	2	2	3
1984	Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Office of Foreign Economic Research		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Labor							
1980	Labor Management Services Administration, Branch of Accountability & Review	D	1980	356	9	8	2
1984	Labor Management Services Administration, Branch of Accountability & Review		1984	•	•	•	•
1984	Labor Management Services Administration, Division of Research & Analysis		1984	•	•	•	•
1984	Labor Management Services Administration, Office of Policy & Research		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Bureau of Labor Statistics	M	1980	500	9	7	0
1984	Bureau of Labor Statistics		1984	544	10	20	0
1980	Management Policy & Systems	N	•	•	•	•	•
1984	Management Policy & Systems		•	•	•	•	•
1980	Mine Safety & Health Administration	M	1980	354	5	6	0
1984	Mine Safety & Health Administration		1984	423	3	5	0
1980	Occupational Safety & Health Administration	O	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Occupational Safety & Health Administration		1984	•	9	1	2
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Assistant Secretary for Policy		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**20,576**	**95**	**88**	**30**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**5,929**	**34**	**36**	**23**
Department of State							
1980	Agency for International Development	M	1980	1500	15	8	0
1984	Agency for International Development		1984	4538	34	14	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of the Controller		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Director of Management Operations	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**1,500**	**15**	**8**	**0**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**4,538**	**34**	**14**	**0**

Fiscal year	Government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Transportation							
1980	Federal Aviation Administration, Program Review Staff	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Aviation Administration, Program Review Staff		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Federal Highway Administration Program Review & Coordination Division	C,B	1980	150	3	0	0
1980	Federal Highway Administration, System Surveys Division		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Highway Administration, Policy Planning & Coordination Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Federal Railroad Administration, Program Evaluation Branch	M,B	1980	40	0	3	4
1980	Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Management Systems		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Budget, Development & Program Review		1984	205	5	1	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Maritime Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Program Evaluation	M,B	1980	1700	7	14	0
1980	National Highway Traffic Safety Office of Management System		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Program Evaluation		1984	1900	11	22	37
1980	Research & Special Programs Administration	C	1980	•	9	0	1
1984	Research & Special Programs Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Office of Program Review		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Office of the Secretary, Director of Management Planning	M,B	1980	610	16	12	0
1980	Office of the Secretary, Office of Programs & Evaluation		1980	430	5	0	5
1984	Office of the Secretary, Office of Program & Evaluation		1984	943	16	0	0

Fiscal year	Government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations: In-house	Number of program evaluations: External
Department of Transportation							
1980	Urban Mass Transportation Administration, Office of Program Evaluation	M,B	1980	695	7	5	2
1980	Urban Mass Transportation Office of Management Systems		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Urban Mass Transportation Administration, Office of Budget and Program Review		1984	375	4	3	3
1980	U.S. Coast Guard, Plans Evaluation Division	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	U.S. Coast Guard, Programs Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**3,625**	**47**	**34**	**12**
1984	**Total Department**		**1994**	**3,423**	**36**	**26**	**40**
Department of Treasury							
1980	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms	C	1980	40	0	1	0
1984	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Bureau of Engraving & Printing, Office of Engineering	L	1980	556	12	1	3
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Bureau of Engraving & Printing, Management & Organization Division	M	1980	540	42	29	0
1980	Bureau of Engraving & Printing, Office of Financial Management		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Engraving & Printing, Office of Management & Systems		1984	1044	19	14	2
1980	Bureau of Government Finance & Operations	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Bureau of Government Finance & Operations		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Program Research & Evaluation	D	1980	230	5	7	0
1984	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Program Research & Evaluation		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Internal Revenue Service	C	1980	949	4	26	3
1984	Internal Revenue Service		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	U.S. Mint	O	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	U.S. Mint		1984	137	2	8	0
1980	Office of Revenue Sharing	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Revenue Sharing		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Department of Treasury							
1980	U.S. Savings Bonds Division	M	1980	150	2	3	1
1984	U.S. Savings Bonds Division		1984	400	6	5	1
1980	U.S. Secret Service	M	1980	126	4	10	0
1984	U.S. Secret Service		1984	164	5	9	0
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	0
1984	U.S. Secret Service, Office of Inspection		1984	1875	25	21	0
1980	Office of the Secretary, Office of Budget & Program Analysis	M,A	1980	260	5	11	0
1984	Office of the Secretary, Office of Management & Organization		1984	175	4	41	1
1984	Office of the Secretary, Office of Management & Organization		1984	77	•	12	1
1980	**Total Department**		**1980**	**2,851**	**74**	**88**	**7**
1984	**Total Department**		**1984**	**4,671**	**61**	**110**	**5**
1980	Subtotal: All departments		1980	161,065	1,088	1,055	608
1984	Subtotal: All departments		1984	108,850	687	791	464
Agency							
ACTION							
1980	ACTION, Evaluation Division	M	1980	1,326	38	23	3
1984	ACTION		1984	601	5	9	6
Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Budget & Management		1984	•	•	•	•
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation		1984	•	•	•	•
American Battle Monuments Commission							
1980	American Battle Monuments Commission	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	American Battle Monuments Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Appalachian Regional Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Appalachian Regional Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Board for International Broadcasting							
1980	Board for International Broadcasting	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Board for International Broadcasting		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
Civil Aeronautics Board							
1980	Civil Aeronautics Board	D	1980	1,353	40	10	0
1984	Civil Aeronautics Board		1984	•	•	•	•
Commission of Fine Arts							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Commission of Fine Arts		1984	•	•	•	•
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights							
1980	Office of Program Planning & Evaluation	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Program Planning & Evaluation		1984	•	•	•	•
Committee for Purchase from the Blind & Other Severely Handicapped							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Committee for Purchase from the Blind & Other Severely Handicapped		1984	•	•	•	•
Commodity Futures Trading Commission							
1980	Commodity Futures Trading Commission	M	1980	133	3	6	0
1984	Commodity Futures Trading Commission		1984	200	3	10	0
Consumer Product Safety Commission							
1980	Consumer Product Safety Commission	M	1980	165	5	14	6
1984	Consumer Product Safety Commission		1984	495	5	6	5
Council of Economic Advisors							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Council of Economic Advisors		1984	•	•	•	•
Council on Environmental Quality							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Council on Environmental Quality		1984	•	•	•	•
Environmental Protection Agency							
1980	Environmental Protection Agency	M	1980	1090	25	5	5
1984	Environmental Protection Agency		1984	1225	20	18	0
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission							
1980	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	P	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission		1984	1009	17	19	0

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
Export-Import Bank of the U.S.							
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Export-Import Bank of the U.S.		1984	272	6	17	0
Farm Credit Administration							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Administrative Division		1984	•	•	•	•
Federal Communications Commission							
1980	Federal Communications Commission	J	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Communications Commission		1984	120	3	7	0
Federal Deposit Insurance Corp							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.		1984	•	•	•	•
Federal Election Commission							
1980	Federal Election Commission	R	1980	120	5	3	0
1984	Federal Election Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Federal Emergency Management Agency							
1980	Program Analysis & Evaluation	O	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Program Analysis & Evaluation		1984	688	10	18	5
Federal Home Loan Bank Board							
1980	Federal Home Loan Bank Board	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Home Loan Bank Board		1984	•	•	•	•
Federal Labor Relations Authority							
1980	Federal Labor Relations Board	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
Federal Maritime Commission							
1980	Federal Maritime Commission	M	1980	164	4	6	1
1984	Federal Maritime Commission		1984	244	5	9	0
Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service							
1980	Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service	M	1980	297	5	25	0
1984	Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service		1984	300	4	2	0
Federal Reserve System							
1980	None	S	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Reserve System		1984	•	•	•	•
Federal Trade Commission							
1980	Federal Trade Commission	M	1980	725	11	8	31
1984	Federal Trade Commission		1984	350	2	•	22

Fiscal year	and government unit	Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
General Services Administration							
1980	Automated Data & Telecommunication Service	J	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Information Resources Management		1984	•	12	4	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Board of Contract Appeals, Executive Director		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Board of Contract Appeals, Law Division		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Director of Budget, Plans, Programs, & Financial Management	C,B	1980	165	10	8	0
1980	Office of Planning & Analysis		1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Budget		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Federal Property Resources Service, Management Planning & Review Division	C	1980	179	4	17	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Property Resources Service, Program Support Office		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Property Resources Service, Office of Real Property		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Property Resources Service, Office of Stockpile Management		1984	•	•	•	•
General Services Administration							
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Federal Property Resources Service, Office of Stockpile Transactions		1984	90	2	2	0
1980	Federal Supply & Services	C	1980	248	10	17	2
1984	Office of Federal Supply & Services		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Finance		1984	170	4	5	0
1980	Office of Human Resources & Organization	E	1980	132	3	9	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Information Security Oversight Office		1984	650	10	102	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Inspector General, Policy & Evaluation Division		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
1980	National Capital Region	M	1980	551	25	22	0
1984	National Capital Region		1984	•	4	100	0
1980	National Archives & Records Service[c]	M,A	1980	275	10	28	0
1984	Assistant Archivist, Federal Rec Center[c]		1984	55	1	7	0
1984	Director, Records Disposition Center[c]		1984	42	1	8	0
1980	Office of Organization & Management	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Policy & Management Systems		1984	790	18	48	0
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Policy & Regulatory Impact		1984	365	7	5	0
1980	Public Buildings Service, Office of Buildings Management	C	1980	653	21	66	0
1984	Public Buildings Service, Office of Buildings Management		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Public Buildings Service, Office of Contracts, Evaluation Division	M	1980	45	1	3	0
1984	Public Building Service, Office of Policy & Program Support		1984	321	7	7	0
1980	Public Buildings Service, Office of Design & Construction	M	1980	625	15	44	0
1984	Public Buildings Service, Office of Design & Construction		1984	464	11	39	0
1980	Public Buildings Service, Office of Federal Protective Service Management	M	1980	132	4	12	0
1984	Public Buildings Service, Office of Federal Protection & Safety		1984	187	4	9	0
General Services Administration							
1980	Public Buildings Service, Office of Program Support	E	1980	165	6	11	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Public Buildings Service, Office of Public Utilities		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Public Buildings Service, Office of Space Management	M	1980	1932	50	1	0
1984	Public Buildings Service, Office of Space Management		1984	2996	52	9	0
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Transportation Audits		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
1980	Transportation & Public Utilities Service	E	1980	286	9	4	0
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	**Total GSA**		**1980**	**5,409**	**168**	**242**	**2**
1984	**Total GSA**		**1984**	**6,129**	**133**	**345**	**0**
U.S. Information Agency							
1980	International Communication Agency	C	1980	1178	21	78	0
1984	U.S. Information Agency, Office of Management		1984	•	•	•	•
Inter-American Foundation							
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Inter-American Foundation		1984	900	5	0	50
U.S. International Trade Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	U.S. International Trade Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Interstate Commerce Commission							
1980	Interstate Commerce Commission, Administration Technologies	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Interstate Commerce Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Japan-United States Friendship Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Japan-United States Friendship Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Legal Services Corporation							
1980	Legal Services Corporation	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
Marine Mammal Commission							
1980	Marine Mammal Commission	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
Merit Systems Protection Board							
1980	Merit Systems Protection Board	M	1980	10	1	2	0
1984	Merit Systems Protection Board		1984	800	12	10	0
U.S. Metric Board							
1980	Office of Administration Services and Finance	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
National Aeronautics & Space Administration							
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Aeronautics & Space Administration		1984	4100	45	6	1

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
National Capital Planning Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Capital Planning Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
National Commission on Libraries & Information Science							
1980	National Commission on Libraries & Information	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
National Credit Union Administration							
1980	National Credit Union Administration	M	1980	192	6	6	0
1984	National Credit Union Administration		1984	110	2	2	0
National Endowment for the Arts							
1980	National Endowment for the Arts	M	1980	320	1	0	10
1984	National Endowment for the Arts		1984	17	2	0	3
National Endowment for the Humanities							
1980	Assistant Director for Evaluation	C	1980	507	2	0	1
1984	Office of Program & Policy Studies		1984	•	•	•	•
National Labor Relations Board							
1980	Director of Administration	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Director of Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
National Mediation Board							
1980	National Mediation Board	N	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Mediation Board		1984	•	•	•	•
National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)		1984	•	•	•	•
National Science Foundation							
1980	National Science Foundation	M	1980	256	4	2	0
1984	National Science Foundation		1984	330	4	5	1
National Transportation Safety Board							
1980	National Transportation Safety Board	T	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	National Transportation Safety Board		1984	•	•	•	•
Navajo & Hopi Indian Relocation Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Navajo & Hopi Relocation Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Nuclear Regulatory Commission							
1980	Nuclear Regulatory Commission	M	1980	351	7	101	1
1984	Nuclear Regulatory Commission		1984	2126	53	268	0

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
Occupational Safety & Health Review Commission							
1980	None	S	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Finance & Administration Services		1984	•	•	•	•
Office of Management & Budget							
1980	None	S	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Management & Budget		1984	•	•	•	•
Office of Personnel Management							
1980	Office of Personnel Management	J	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Office of Personnel Management		1984	395	9	6	1
Overseas Private Investment Corporation							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Overseas Private Investment Corp		1984	•	•	•	•
Panama Canal Commission							
1980	Panama Canal Commission	C	1980	35	1	1	0
1984	Panama Canal Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Peace Corps							
1980	Peace Corps	M	1980	570	17	10	2
1984	Peace Corps		1984	90	2	9	3
Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corp		1984	•	•	•	•
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation							
1980	Office of Management Services	M	1980	•	3	4	0
1980	Internal Audit Department		1980	180	3	12	0
1984	Corporate Administrative Planning Department		1984	1100	15	12	13
1984	Internal Audit Department		1984	205	3	14	0
Postal Rate Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Postal Rate Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
Postal Service							
1980	None	G	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Chief Postal Inspector		1984	5558	75	45	0
President s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	President s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped		1984	•	•	•	•

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
Railroad Retirement Board							
1980	Bureau of Retirement Claims	M	1980	527	8	10	1
1980	Bureau of Unemployment and Sickness		1980	204	6	4	0
1984	Bureau of Retirement Claims		1984	866	14	10	1
1984	Bureau of Unemployment and Sickness		1984	100	4	6	0
Securities & Exchange Commission							
1980	Securities & Exchange Commission	M	1980	201	6	6	4
1984	Securities & Exchange Commission		1984	74	2	5	0
Selective Service System							
1980	None	I	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Selective Service System		1984	151	5	5	1
Small Business Administration							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Small Business Administration		1984	•	•	•	•
Smithsonian Institute							
1980	Smithsonian Institute	M	1980	123	2	10	4
1984	Smithsonian Institute		1984	395	7	24	0
Susquehanna River Basin Commission							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	Susquehanna River Basin Commission		1984	•	•	•	•
U S Synthetic Fuels Corporation							
1980	None	H	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	U S Synthetic Fuels Corporation		1984	•	•	•	•
Tennessee Valley Authority							
1980	Tennessee Valley Authority	M	1980	•	1	6	3
1984	Tennessee Valley Authority		1984	244	4	16	1
Veterans Administration							
1980	Veterans Administration	M	1980	925	26	30	0
1984	Veterans Administration		1984	852	16	19	1

Fiscal year and government unit		Status code	Year	Total resources ($000)[a]	No. of staff at beginning of year[b]	Number of program evaluations	
						In-house	External
Agency							
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars							
1980	Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars	F	1980	•	•	•	•
1984	None		1984	•	•	•	•
1980	Subtotal: all agencies		1980	16,360	419	625	74
1984	Subtotal: all agencies		1984	30,045	492	922	114
1980	**Total: departments and agencies**		**1980**	**177,424**	**1,507**	**1,680**	**682**
1984	**Total: departments and agencies**		**1984**	**138,895**	**1,179**	**1,713**	**578**

[a]Figures are estimated actual nominal dollars reported late in each fiscal year. Entries in this column may not sum to totals shown, due to rounding.

[b]Full-time equivalents for professional staff only.

[c]Bullets indicate data were not reported.

[d]For OMB comments on data reported from this unit, see appendix III. For GAO's response, see chapter 7.

[e]National Archives was established as an independent agency in FY 1985.

Characteristics of the Survey Responses

Surveys can be influenced by several factors that complicate interpretation of the results. In this appendix we describe several analyses that we conducted to diagnose the extent to which departures from ideal conditions might have influenced the results we have reported.

Population Enumeration

One of the most difficult aspects of conducting a census of the sort that was undertaken for this report is the identification of relevant program evaluation units. We have described our procedures in chapter 1. We relied on key officials within departments and agencies in completing the enumeration process; it is possible that they could have overlooked some units. Inasmuch as these overlooked units would not have received a questionnaire and therefore would not have been included in our study, our results might be different had they not been excluded by the department/agency official.

While our enumeration procedure attempted to include as many units as possible, there is no satisfactory way of knowing for certain whether we were successful. One way to estimate the overall influence of exclusions (i.e., survey nonparticipation) is to simulate the problem through sensitivity analysis on data that were reported. By recomputing our basic data as if each department had been excluded, one at a time, we estimated what effect the exclusion of a department might have had on the results. For example, if the officials at the Department of Interior had deleted all of the Department's evaluation units on our list, the aggregate total for fiscal resources would have been $154.8 million in 1980 and $84.6 million in 1984 (in 1980 constant dollars), instead of $161.1 million and $86.9 million, as reported for 1980 and 1984, respectively. In terms of percent change, our results would have indicated a decline of 45.4 percent—if the Department of Interior had not responded—instead of 46.1 percent, a difference in aggregate result of less that 1 percent.

When this recalculation is done by excluding each department separately, the average difference between the actual values and those derived from the simulated exclusions is very small. That is, excluding each department, one at a time, and averaging the discrepancies between actual and simulated values shows that our estimates of the degree of change that occurred between 1980 and 1984 is on average about the same as the actual value we report. Specifically, the average difference is less than three tenths of one percent for fiscal and human resources; for evaluations it is slightly above 1 percent. This means that

if any one department (similar to those that did respond) had not cooperated, the results would not have been appreciably affected, on average.

This does not mean that the results would have been exactly as reported if a particular department had not participated. Had we not received data from some departments, the percent change would have been higher or lower than reported. For fiscal resources, the full data show a change of −46 percent, and the range of results in the sensitivity analysis was roughly −41 to −53 percent, depending upon which department had been excluded. Similarly, while the full set of data for human resources shows a 37 percent decline in staff, by excluding each department separately the range was about −31 to −47 percent. And, while we reported roughly a 25 percent reduction in the number of evaluations, the range was −20 to −36 percent depending upon which unit was omitted.

A similar set of calculations were undertaken by excluding each individual department for 1984 only. These results show that, on average, nonparticipation would influence the results by about 5 percent, on average, for each of the three measures of evaluation activity. That is, whereas we report about a 46 percent decline in fiscal resources, the exclusion of any individual department could result in an estimate of −51 percent. Similarly, the 37 percent reduction in human resources would have been as much as 42 percent had any department not participated; for evaluation studies, the corresponding figure is −31 percent, instead of −26 percent as reported.

From these recalculations we find that failing to include a single large department in both surveys is likely to influence our assessments of the extent of change by about no more than 1 percent, on average. Further, if a major department or agency did not participate in the survey in 1984, these analyses suggest that our indices of the magnitude of change would be influenced upward by about 5 percentage points. Given the size of the changes that we have reported, ranging from 26 to 46 percent decreases, a 5 percent difference would not alter any of the conclusions that are drawn.

Response Consistency

As noted earlier, a substantial number of evaluation units reported a continued evaluation function between 1980 and 1984. However, we have noted several types of change that could influence the accuracy of the year-to-year reporting. For example, with few exceptions, those

individuals who completed the 1980 questionnaire were not the same individuals who completed the 1984 version. This raises the possibility of noncomparability across the two survey administrations (e.g., individuals might have interpreted the questions differently). To assess the degree of consistency across the two time points, rank-order correlations were computed.[1] For fiscal resources, staffing levels and number of evaluation studies, the correlations between data for FY 1980 and FY 1984 were .64, .50 and .52, respectively. That is, despite differences in who had completed the questionnaire, changes in the level of fiscal and staff resources, and all other changes that occurred during this period, there was a considerable degree of overall consistency in reporting.

The correlational analysis provides evidence that the 1980 and 1984 responses for fiscal and human resources are related, i.e., consistently reported. They do not, however, indicate whether there was any upward or downward biasing of the reported values. That is, while the correlations assess whether the relative rank-ordering of the responses is similar across the two time periods, they do not indicate whether the respondents provided biased responses. In assessing the extent to which this might have occurred, we contrasted the average values for fiscal and staff resources reported in 1980 with the average values for 1980 as reported in 1984. This difference was then contrasted to the standard deviation for 1980 data, forming a relative effects ratio.[2] If respondents systematically under- or over-reported their levels of fiscal and human resources, the relative effects ratios would depart from zero. Our calculations show that biased reporting is minimal. That is, for fiscal and human resources, the relative effects ratios were .06 and .03, respectively. As such, for these major variables, the correlations and the relative effects ratios suggest that we can be reasonably confident that reported changes are a meaningful reflection of the true changes that occurred in these units.

The Influence of the 1982 Special Study

When the 1984 questionnaire was mailed to the evaluation officials identified in our population, a copy of the 1982 Special Study also was sent. Since the Special Study included information on each unit that had responded to the 1980 survey, it is possible that our 1984 respondents used this information to frame their response to the 1984 questionnaire

[1]Rank-order correlations measure the consistency of rankings of cases across two variables of interest.

[2]See Seymour Sudman and Norman M. Bradburn, Response Effects in Surveys, A Review and Synthesis. Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1974.

(e.g., respondents to the 1984 survey could have referred to their own units' 1980 budget and staff figures to guide their responses). As such, the response consistency reported above might be inflated and, more importantly, the values that were reported in 1984 may not reflect the true state of affairs within these units.

Since the 1980 and 1984 questionnaires contained overlapping items on budget figures for 1980 and 1981, and for staff for 1980 through 1983, we were able to assess the degree of influence that sending the Special Study might have had on the 1984 response. While the 1980 data were reported in the Special Study, the 1981 through 1983 data were not. If responses in 1984 were influenced by values appearing in the 1982 Special Study, we would expect to find markedly higher consistency for the published 1980 figures than for values from other years (that is, those not published in the 1982 report). If on the other hand, the data on the 1980 variables show no marked differences from those for other years, then we may conclude that the influence of "seeing the first report" had negligible effects on reports of the 1984 data and changes between 1980 and 1984.

Correlating responses for data on fiscal resources obtained from the 1980 questionnaire and reported in the 1982 study with responses obtained in 1984 for the same year (i.e., 1980) yields a correlation of .83. Comparing the unpublished 1981 data from each survey yields a correlation of .73. The drop in the magnitude of these coefficients could be interpreted as the maximum influence of sending out the 1982 study. Similarly, comparing the correlations for staffing levels for 1980 with the 1981 levels (not reported in the 1982 study) also reveals a small decrease in consistency—from .71 to .68. The correlations of staff data for the remaining years (1982 and 1983) are comparable (.60 and .58, respectively). As such, the data on fiscal resources suggest the possibility of a very slight reliance on the 1980 survey results, but this finding can alternatively be explained by the fact that questions on the 1980 questionnaire about 1981-1983 staff levels refer to projected levels of staff. The same is true for fiscal resources. On the other hand, the 1984 questionnaire items pertain to actual levels for these years. As such, the questions are not exactly comparable. Despite these procedural differences, the differences in the correlations are relatively small (ranging from .02 to .10), revealing little basis for concern about contamination of responses in 1984 due to the distribution of the 1982 Special Study.

Comments From the Office of Management and Budget

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON D.C. 20503

August 29, 1986

Mr. William J. Anderson
Director
General Government Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The Director has asked me to respond to your request for review and comments on the General Accounting Office's proposed report entitled "Evaluation Today: Fewer Units, Reduced Resources, Different Studies Than in 1980." The draft report assesses the nature and scope of Federal program evaluation activities in 1984 and examines changes that have occurred since 1980.

We recommend that the report not be published because it is seriously flawed. The reasons for this recommendation follow.

The Role of Program Evaluation

The role of program evaluation, its uses, target populations, and dissemination, is limited in the Executive agencies. The primary purpose of evaluation is to improve the quality and efficiency of agency programs. To this end, evaluation efforts have been carefully examined as to their efficiency, timeliness, sensitivity to particular institutional characteristics, usefulness, and likelihood of being employed by agency decision-makers.

Now p. 4

Agency decision-makers, who are the target population, are not threatened with the "information shortage" that GAO concludes is prevalent (p. vi). They have the discretion to include resources for program evaluations in their internal process of resource allocation, which permits them to respond to needs for information.

Furthermore, the primary responsibility of agency program evaluators is to support internal decision-making, not to produce program evaluation information for the public and the Congress. Of course, the program evaluations are available to the public upon request and to the Congress as part of oversight reports, testimony, and hearings.

See comment 1.

GAO's proposal regarding the dissemination of program evaluation information to the public "regardless of source or type..." (p. vii) is in direct conflict with this Administration's and the Congress's policy of reducing paperwork and enhancing the economy and efficiency of the Government by improving Federal information policy-making pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-511). This policy requires consideration of whether the information will have

practical utility for the agency (op cit., section 3504 (c)(2)). In effect, it requires the application of program evaluation to data collection for program evaluation.[1]

A Shift in Character (for the better) in Program Evaluation

While GAO terms the shift in the character of evaluations between 1980 and 1984 toward more "low-cost," "short turnaround," "internal" and "non-technical studies", it seems more appropriate to term these shifts as "efficient", "timely", "sensitive", and "useful" studies. In this light, the title of Chapter 2, "Small Gains, Big Losses: Changes in Executive Branch Program Evaluation" could properly be revised to "Reduced Evaluation Burdens, Improved Utility: Changes in Executive Branch Program Evaluations."

See comment 2.

Efficiency in government is, of course, one of this Administration's foremost concerns.[2] Through reorganization and consolidation of the program evaluation function, various agencies have been able to utilize existing staff talents and reduce the cost of program evaluations. GAO correctly notes this action as having significantly improved the overall qualifications of program evaluation staffs.

See comment 3.

Furthermore, the shift in character of program evaluation has made it possible to provide results in a timely manner, making it possible for evaluations to have a real impact on program decision-making and contribute to annual budget processes. In the evaluation of programs, obsolescence of results has generally been the rule. This improvement in timeliness ensures that program evaluations are available when needed.

See comment 4.

The sensitivity of internal studies to institutional realities -- such as management styles, organizational history, and staff receptivity -- significantly affects the value of a report. External studies, which tout the objectivity of

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1 GAO appears to be suggesting that the Congress should impose more program evaluation activities and set-asides on agencies to generate more oversight reports and information. On the other hand, the Executive Branch and Congress (S. 992 that passed the Senate on March 14, 1986 and reported to the House Committee in Government Operations, where it was reported on June 14 as H.R. 2518) have worked jointly to manage this costly burden on agencies. Also, see GAO's voluminous report, Requirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress (1984). This is a 447-page annotated list of the Reports to Congress provided by Federal agencies in 1984.

2 See, for example, Management of the United States Government, FY 1987, for a discussion of efforts under way to achieve greater efficiency in the Federal Government.

non-institutional involvement, tend to provide recommendations of limited applicability, except to "model" organizations. The current, more internalized character -- a careful balance between impartiality and a general sensitivity to institutional constraints -- has proven to be of most benefit toward program improvements. As GAO correctly notes, utilization is dependent on producer/user relations (p. 6-3).

Now p. 45

Usefulness of program evaluation results is related to the ability of decision-makers to understand the evaluative results within the context of the particular organization. The trend toward the less-technical has increased the receptivity of decision-makers to evaluation results. Complex modeling techniques and reservoirs of primary data can tend to overwhelm rather than to inform decision-makers. Decision-makers are capable of deciding the form and level of technical complexity they will find evaluation results most useful, and the results are far more useful when their preferences are followed.

See comment 5

Data Collection and Analysis

We have significant problems with the data collection and analysis underlying the GAO study. In comparing resources (e.g., funds and staff), the use of actual as opposed to estimated or anticipated values is important. For example, the report compares percentage of personnel reduction in program evaluation (based on estimates) with personnel reductions throughout an agency (based on actuals). This is an improper comparison when actual data are available for both years. The potential margin of error is large otherwise. (p. 2-3.)

See comment 6

Now p. 24

One example is the case of the Department of Education. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Select Education, GAO provided statistical information based on estimated (rather than actual) funds available for program evaluation activities in 1980 and 1984.[3] This was provided to the Subcommittee despite the availability of both sets of data. While the decline is large in either case, the use of estimated data clearly overstates it. Specifically, the reduction is from $22.7 million to $10.9 million (-52%) in estimated program funds as reported to the Subcommittee, and from $18.2 million to $12.4 million (-32%) in actual program funds.

The GAO study generalizes about data on program evaluations

[3] See The Chronicle of Higher Education, page 16, March 1, 1986 for a description of the testimony provided by GAO to the House Subcommittee on Select Education. Department of Education staff members who worked with the GAO staff members in responding to the 1984 Program Evaluation survey report that GAO was aware that actual numbers were available to GAO at that time.

and assumes that there is a meaningful relationship between the number of evaluations made and the quantity of evaluative information made available. For example, the draft report states, as an assumption, that "the number of evaluations planned, completed, or underway is an indicator of the amount of information likely to be available to users of results" (p. 1-16). This assumption is not necessarily valid. The Grace Commission recognized the problems with this assumption:

Now p. 20

See comment 7

> "Program evaluations represent information.... Each evaluation activity must be considered on its own merits and cannot be considered separately from its plans, procedures, internal uses, contribution to overall program and Administration activities and policies, and costs." p. 38.

The Department of Commerce Case

Since GAO highlighted the case of program evaluations in the Department of Commerce, OMB queried Commerce about their responses to the GAO survey. We have concluded that GAO data collection was performed with little institutional knowledge, and resulted in data of no analytical value. GAO researchers sent an evaluation questionnaire to only the Assistant Secretary for Administration. No program evaluations were performed in that Office, and the GAO researchers concluded that there were no program evaluations performed throughout the entire agency.

See comment 8

Now pp. 66-67

The Department of Commerce has confirmed to OMB that GAO did not consult with any of the Bureaus or Administrations, which, in 1980, performed 95% of the evaluations for the Department (GAO draft report, p. II-16). The Inspector General's Office alone has stated that they performed 11 program evaluations in 1984, as defined in GAO's questionnaire to agencies (see the enclosure for a list of the program evaluations performed by the Inspector General's Office in 1984). The Commerce case calls into question the validity of GAO's research process for this study. The wrong people were consulted because the organization of the agency being studied appears not to have been understood.

Now p. 20

Furthermore, contrary to GAO's contention that "no formal method (such as on-site interviewing) could be undertaken to verify the accuracy or completeness of reporting by respondents to their mailed survey" (p. 1-15), agencies consulted by OMB noted meetings -- considered to be "on-site interviewing" -- with GAO regarding this survey. In fact, the Department of Commerce reported that there were a series of meetings simply to define "program evaluation."

Floors and Set-Asides

OMB objects to the General Accounting Office's suggestion

that the Congress should "consider whether some floor of resources" in the form of set-asides should be provided for evaluation units in the Executive agencies. Evaluation is a program management tool, and it plays a valuable role in the effective and efficient execution of Federal programs. The resources to be allocated to evaluation -- and to other activities -- can be decided properly only by agency executives. The proposal that this decision be imposed from without is objectionable and could result in a waste of taxpayers' dollars and a limitation on the flexibility of program managers to respond properly to individual program needs.

One common problem with set-asides, as noted by the Grace Commission, is that poor evaluations due to "inadequate planning and budgeting" can result from an obligation to expend funds that have been legislatively "set-aside" for evaluation purposes.[4] The commitment to use resources for program evaluation and to produce results that are efficient, timely, sensitive, and useful must come from program managers and top policy officials. These decision-makers and program managers can effect changes that result in more effective and efficient programs. While OMB and the Congress may request special program evaluations from time-to-time, the flexibility (which GAO agrees is critical, p. 7-6) to perform program evaluations must remain with the program managers.

Now p. 32

Responsibilities for Program Evaluation

See comment 9

A significant omission from the report is an analysis of GAO's evaluation activities. Under 31 U.S.C. 717 on evaluating programs and activities in the United States Government, the Comptroller General is mandated to "evaluate the results of a program or activity the government carries out under existing law..." (Section 717(b)). Although the draft report purports to describe Federal program evaluation activities in 1980 and 1984, it fails to include any evaluation reports by the General Accounting Office.

See comment 10

While the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) does not have a statutory mandate to fulfill an evaluation or auditing function, it does, under its general authorities, conduct evaluations and request that evaluations be made. To carry out this function well does not require, as the GAO report implies, that there be "regular and systematic information" on evaluations. This is why OMB rescinded Circular No. A-117 in 1983.

There is also an inconsistency in the report with respect to

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[4] See page 38 of the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, "Task Force Report on Federal Management Systems, Report FMS-10, Improvement of Federal Evaluation," Working Appendix, vol. II.

See comment 11

Now p. 12

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one aspect of OMB's role in program evaluations. The draft report clearly hypothesizes that OMB's involvement under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-511) "could be expected to hinder or delay production and dissemination of the evaluation data" (p. 1-4). Later in the text, after considering observations of the agencies, the draft report states that "overall, the effect of OMB or the processes for conducting evaluations was not reported to have changed notably since 1980" (p. 5-5). These agency observations should be linked to GAO's hypothesis, concluding that based on agency comments, OMB was found not to have hindered or delayed agency evaluation activities despite enactment of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Conclusion

In summary, the Office of Management and Budget suggests that GAO not publish the study, certainly not in its current form. The research design, methods, and analyses are seriously flawed.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this report. If you have any further questions regarding OMB's concerns, please call Ed Rea, at 395-3172.

Sincerely,

David S. Mathiasen, acting
for
Carey P. Modlin
Assistant Director
for Budget Review

Enclosure

Attachment

Sample of Program Evaluations Performed by the Inspector General, Department of Commerce: 1984*

January 1984	**International Trade Administration,** "Ways to Strengthen Export Expansion Activities at U.S. Trade Shows"
February 1984	**Economic Development Administration,** "Management of Business Loan Portfolio has Cost the Government Millions Without Fully Realizing Intended Economic Benefits"
March 1984	**Economic Development Administration,** "Loan Guarantee Applicant (Borrower) Screening"
April 1984	**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,** "Opportunity to Conduct Hydrographic Surveys More Economically"
May 1984	**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,** "The National Weather Service Upper Air Program Needs to Improve Safety and Shipping Practices"
June 1984	**Bureau of the Census,** "Mapping Operations"
September 1984	**International Trade Administration,** "Export Expansion Activities Need a Sharper Focus and Better Internal Coordination"
September 1984	**Economic Development Administration,** "Preliminary Findings and Recommendations on the Emergency Jobs Act Program"
September 1984	**National Telecommunications and Information and Information Administration,** "Selected Aspects of the Administration of Public Telecommunications Facilities Grants"

September 1984	**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,** "The Space Environment Laboratory Needs to Improve the Economy of Solar Broadcasts"
November 1984	**Minority Business Development Agency,** "Minority Business Development Center Program--A Need for Realistic Goals and Improved Measurements of MBDC Effectiveness"

*Source: Semiannual Report to the Congress, U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, 1984.

The following are additional GAO comments on the Office of Management and Budget's letter dated August 29, 1986.

GAO Comments

1. The proposal has been revised. See chapter 7.

2. OMB has misinterpreted our analysis of the educational backgrounds of evaluation staff. We observe that the proportion of staff with advanced degrees has increased (chapter 4). Since our survey data do not permit linking this change to a probable cause, methodological soundness dictates that we attribute this improvement in staff educational backgrounds neither to consolidation of the evaluation function nor to reduction in the cost of evaluations, as implied in OMB's comments.

3. We agree with OMB that evaluations need to display sensitivity to institutional realities surrounding programs to be evaluated. Our concern with the increase in internal studies is the point at which "sensitivity" to concerns of those responsible for managing programs evolves into compromised objectivity or limitations in perspective.

4. OMB appears to have misconstrued our findings regarding the quantity of evaluation reports produced (see footnote 1 in OMB's letter). At no point in this report do we suggest that the overall number of evaluation products (such as reports or briefings) should be increased. Our concern is with measuring and documenting any changes in the size of the effort, in its character and in its use. As part of our discussion we have drawn out the implications of the shifts we observed in terms of the likely availability of certain types of evaluative evidence (e.g., results-oriented) for congressional oversight purposes. As such, it may be more a matter of examining the balance between types of evaluations rather than adding more products.

5. OMB states that less technical reports are more useful and more readily received by decision-makers. This may be true, but OMB offers no factual evidence to support this statement and our results do not directly answer the point. Fitting the technical level of report language to user preferences addresses only part of a broader concern for the overall usefulness of evaluations. Changes we have observed in the size and scope of federal evaluations indicate that they are now less likely to involve methodologies needed to answer questions about program results. While it is true that technically sophisticated analyses could be disclosed in non-technical language, our results suggest that, given the

amount of time and resources being devoted, the basic data for answering evaluative questions are not being collected.

6. OMB states that our comparison of personnel reductions in evaluation with those throughout nondefense departments and agencies is improper, since the figures for evaluation units are based on estimates, while the government-wide figures are based on actual numbers of staff. OMB has misunderstood our method of collecting these data from evaluation units. Survey respondents provided actual numbers of professional staff for 1980 and 1984, the years included in our analysis. The data from the survey and those from OPM therefore are comparable.

7. We retain our assumption that the number of evaluation studies is an indicator of the quantity of evaluative information available to users of evaluation results, despite OMB's questioning the validity of this position. We recognize that number of studies is not an entirely satisfactory measure, but we believe it is a reasonable measure to use. OMB offers no alternative measure, and OMB's quotation from the Grace Commission report does not clarify the issue of how evaluation activities ought to be defined and measured. Indeed, the Grace Commission point appears to be addressed to evaluation management concerns, rather than to the measurement question.

8. Our statement regarding our data collection procedures has been misinterpreted by OMB. We did conduct interviews with officials (as reported by those agencies consulted by OMB) to identify potential evaluation units prior to mailing out the questionnaire. As we noted in chapter 1, we could not verify the responses of those who later received and completed the questionnaire. As such, there is no contradiction as implied by OMB.

9. OMB correctly notes that General Accounting Office evaluation activities were not included in our report. While GAO does conduct program evaluations, our responsibility is to assist the Congress in its oversight of executive branch activities. Our report addresses executive branch program evaluation only.

10. We agree that OMB's general legislative authorities do not require it to produce systematic information on evaluation. As a practical matter, however, OMB may find it prudent to do so, in order to enhance overall management functions and strengthen accountability of evaluation activities.

11. Regarding OMB's role in implementing the Paperwork Reduction Act and possible hindrance of evaluative data collection and dissemination, we retain our conclusion that OMB's effect on these functions appears not to have changed between 1980 and 1984. We reject the suggestion that OMB was found not to have hindered evaluation activities. Our data show that some problems have been encountered by evaluation units, although these have not been extensive.

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